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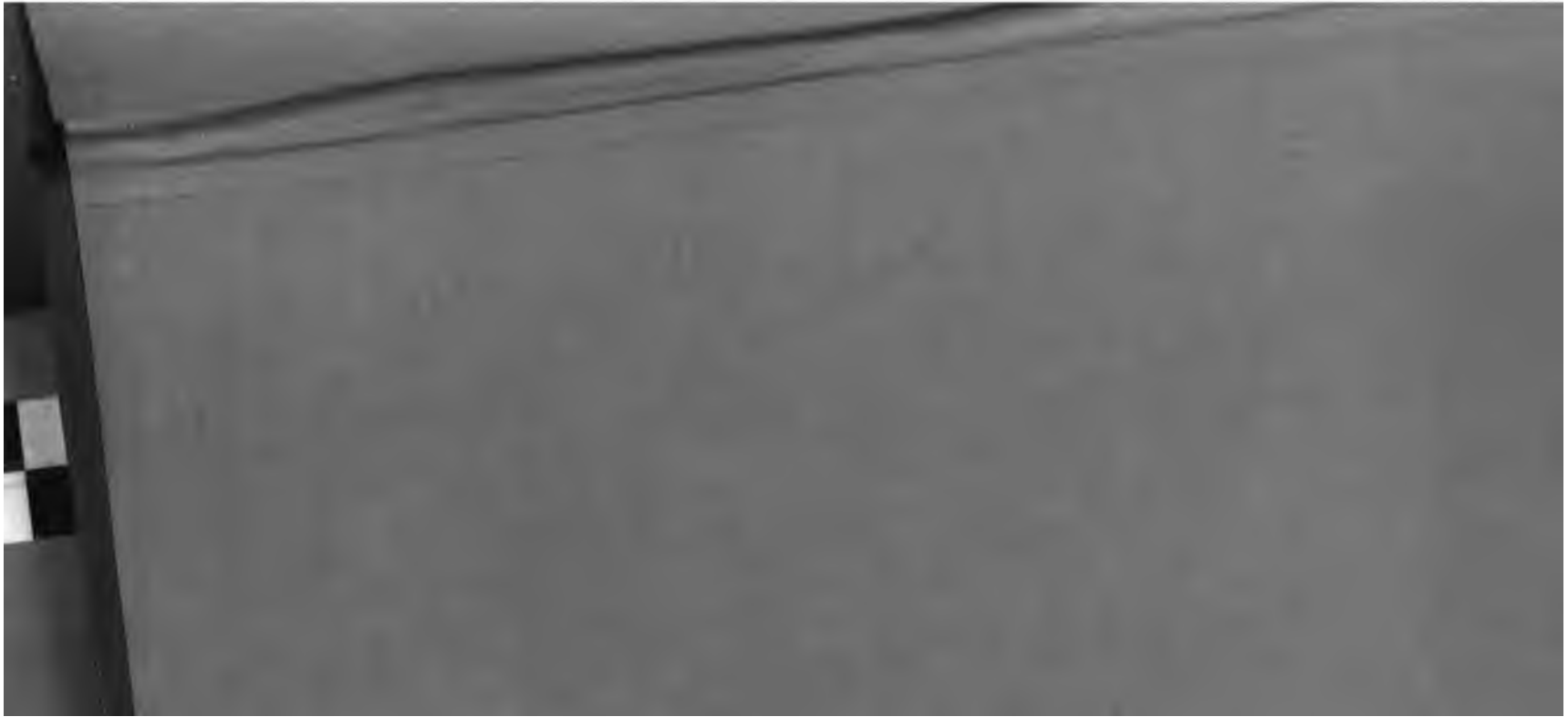

# THE WORKS

OF THE

# POETS

OF

## *GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND;*

WITH

## PREFACES

## BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CONTAINING THE

## *LIVES.*

BY DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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# ENGLISH POETS.

## COWLEY.

THE Life of Cowley, notwithstanding the penury of English biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat, an author whose pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language has deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendship, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a history: he has given the character, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with so little detail, that scarcely any thing is distinctly known, but all is shewn confused and enlarged through the mist of panegyrick.

ABRAHAM COWLEY was born in the year one thousand six hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whose condition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen, and, what would probably not have been less carefully suppressed, the omission of his name in the register of St. Dunstan's parish, gives reason to suspect that his father was a sectary. Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his son, and consequently left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood represents as struggling earnestly to procure him a literary education, and who, as she lived to the age of eighty, had her solicitude rewarded by seeing her son eminent, and, I hope, by seeing him fortunate, and partaking his prosperity. We know at least, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and justly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spenser's Fairy Queen; in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents, which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that particular determination of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great Painter of the present age, had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise.

By his mother's solicitation he was admmitted into Westminster-school, where he was soon distinguished. He was wont, says Sprat, to relate, "That "he had this defect in his memory at that time, that his teachers never could "bring it to retain the ordinary rules of grammar."

This is an instance of the natural desire of man to propagate a wonder. It is surely very difficult to tell any thing as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative contained its confutation. A memory admitting some things, and rejecting others, an intellectual digestion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refused the husks, had the appearance of instinctive elegance, of a particular provision made by Nature for literary politeness. But in the author's own honest relation, the marvel vanishes: he was, he says, such "an enemy to all constraint, that his master never could prevailed on him to learn the "rules without book." He does not tell that he could not learn the rules, but that, being able to perform his exercises without them, and being an "enemy to constraint," he spared himself the labour.

Among the English Poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be said "to "lisp in numbers;" and have given such early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehension of things, as to more tardy minds seem scarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, since a volume of his poems was not only written but printed in his thirteenth year*: containing, with other poetical compositions, "The tragical History "of Pyramus and Thisbe," written when he was ten years old; and Con-"stantia and Philetus," written two years after.

While he was yet at school he produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though it was not publised till he had been some time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the pastoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and therefore the time at which it was composed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge†, where he continued his studies with great intenseness; for he is said to have written, while he was yet a young student, the greater part of his "Davideis;" a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the study of many years, but by a mind of the greatest vigour and activity.

Two years after his settlement at Cambridge he published "Love's Riddle," with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby; of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious; and "Naufragium Joculare," a comedy written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models; for it is

* This Volume was not published before 1635, when Cowley was fifteen years old. Dr. Johnson, as well as former Biographers, seems to have been misled by the portrait of Cowley being by mi take marked with the age of thirteen years. E.

† He was a candidate this year at Westminster-school for election to Trinity College, but proved unsuccessful. N.

is not loose verse, but mere prose. It was printed, with a dedication in verse to Dr. Comber, master of the college; but having neither the facility of a popular nor the accuracy of a learned work, it seems to be now universally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince passed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with a representation of the "Guardian," a comedy, which Cowley says was neither written nor acted, but roughdrawn by him, and repeated by the scholars. That this comedy was printed during his absence from his country, he appears to have considered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the suppression of the theatres, it was sometimes privately acted with sufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now master of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge, and sheltered himself at St. John's College in Oxford; where, as is said by Wood, he published a satire, called "The Puritan "and Papist," which was only inserted in the last collection of his works*; and so distinguished himself by the warmth of his loyalty, and the elegance of his conversation, that he gained the kindness and confidence of those who attended the king, and amongst others of Lord Falkland, whose notice cast a lustre on all to whom it was extended.

About the time when Oxford was surrendered to the parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became secretary to the Lord Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, and was employed in such correspondence as the royal cause required, and particularly in cyphering and decyphering the letters that passed between the King and Queen; an employment of the highest confidence and honour. So wide was his province of intelligence, that, for several years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his "Mistress" was published; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a subsequent edition, that "poets are scarce thought "freemen of their company without paying some duties, or obliging themselves to be true to Love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the basis of all excellence is truth: he that professes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtless deserved his tenderness. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes†, who had means enough of information, that whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his passion.

This consideration cannot but abate, in some measure, the reader's esteem for the work and the author. To love excellence, is natural; it is natural likewise for



* In the first edition of this Life, Dr. Johnson wrote, "which was never inserted in any "collection of his works;" but he altered the expression when the Lives were collected into volumes. The satire was added to Cowley's works by his desire. N.

† Barnesii Anacreontem. Dr. J.

the lover to solicit reciprocal regard by an elaborate display of his own qualifications. The desire of pleasing has in different men produced actions of heroism, and effusions of wit; but it seems as reasonable to appear the champion as the poet of an "airy nothing," and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his master Pindar to call the "dream of a shadow."

It is surely not difficult, in the solitude of a college, or in the bustle of the world, to find useful studies and serious employment. No man needs to be so burthened with life as to squander it in voluntary dreams of fictitious occurrences. The man that sits down to suppose himself charged with treason or peculation, and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he was never within the possibility of committing, differs only by the infrequency of his folly from him who praises beauty which he never saw; complains of jealousy which he never felt; supposes himself sometimes invited, and sometimes forsaken; fatigues his fancy, and ransacks his memory, for images which may exhibit the gaiety of hope, or the gloominess of despair, and dresses his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis sometimes in flowers fading as her beauty, and sometimes in gems lasting as her virtues.

At Paris, as secretary to Lord Jermyn, he was engaged in transacting things of real importance, with real men and real women, and at that time did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards Earl of Arlington, from April to December in 1650, are preserved in "Miscellanea Aulica," a collection of papers published by Brown. These letters, being written like those of other men whos mind is more on things than words, contribute no otherwise to his reputation than as they shew him to have been above the affectation of unseasonable elegance, and to have known that the business of a statesman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetorick.

One passage, however, seems not unworthy of some notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty then in agitation:

"The Scotch treaty," he says, "is the only thing now in which we are vitally "concerned; I am one of the last hopers, and yet cannot now abstain from be- "lieving, that an agreement will be made: all people upon the place incline to "that of union. The Scotch will moderate something of the rigour of their "demands; the mutual necessity of an accord is visible, the King is persuaded "of it. And to tell you the truth (which I take to be an argument above all "the rest) Virgil has told the same thing to that purpose."

This expression from a secretary of the present time, would be considered as merely ludicrous, or at most as an ostentatious display of scholarship; but the manners of that time were so tinged with superstition, that I cannot but suspect Cowley of having consulted on this great occasion the Virgilian lots*, and to have given some credit to the answer of his oracle.

Some

* Consulting the Virgilian Lots, Sortes Virgilianæ, is a method of Divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumstances of the perusor the first passage in either of the two pages that he accidentally fixes his eye on. It is said, that king Charles I. and Lord Falkland,

ome years afterwards, "business," says Sprat, "passed of course into other ands;" and Cowley, being no longer useful at Paris, was in 1656 sent back ) England, that, "under pretence of privacy and retirement, he might take tion "of giving notice of the posture of things in this nation."

oon after his return to London he was seized by some messengers of usurping powers, who were sent out in quest of another man; and being examined

lard, being in the Bodleian library, made this experiment of their future fortunes, and with passages equally ominous to each. That of the king was the following:

At bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
Finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna suorum
Funera, nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena.

Æneid, book IV. line 615.

Yet let a race untam'd, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose,
Oppress'd with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men discourag'd, and himself expell'd:
Let him for succour sue from place to place,
Torn from his subjects and his son's embrace.
First let him see his friends in battle slain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain:
And when, at length, the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace;
Nor let him then enjoy supreme command,
But fall untimely by some hostile hand,
And lie unbury'd on the barren sand.

DRYDEN.

Lord FALKLAND'S:

Non hæc, O Palla, dederas promissa parenti,
Cautius ut ævo velles te credere Marti.
Haud ignarus eram, quantum nova gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus primo certamine posset.
Primitiæ juvenis miseræ, bellique propinqui
Dura rudimenta, et nulli exaudita Deorum,
Vota precesque meæ!

Æneid, book XI. line 152.

O Pallas, thou hast fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword;
I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I knew
What perils youthful ardour would pursue;
That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert to dangers raw, to war.
O curst essay of arms, disastrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come,
Hard elements of unauspicious war,
Vain vows to Heaven, and unavailing care. DRYDEN.

ſman, in his Lexicon, gives a very satisfactory account of this practice of seeking fates in : and says, that it was used by the Pagans, the Jewish Rabbins, and even the early tians; the latter taking the New Testament for their oracle. H.

examined was put into confinement, from which he was not dismissed without the security of a thousand pounds given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he published his poems, with a preface, in which he seems to have inserted something, suppressed in subsequent editions, which was interpreted to denote some relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, "that his desire "had been for some days past, and did still very vehemently continue, to retire "himself to some of the American plantations, and to forsake this world for ever."

From the obloquy which the appearance of submission to the usurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him, and indeed it does not seem to have lessened his reputation. His wish for retirement we can easily believe to be undiſſembled; a man harraſſed in one kingdom, and perſecuted in another, who, after a course of business that employed all his days and half his nights in cyphering and decyphering, comes to his own country and steps into a prison, will be willing enough to retire to some place of quiet, and of safety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a ſufferer, dispose us to forget that if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice.

He then took upon himself the character of Physician, still, according to Sprat, with intention "to dissemble the main design of his coming over," and, as Mr. Wood relates, "complying with the men then in power (which was "much taken notice of by the royal party), he obtained an order to be created "Doctor of Phyſick, which being done to his mind, (whereby he gained the "ill-will of some of his friends), he went into France again, having made a "copy of verses on Oliver's death."

This is no favourable representation, yet even in this not much wrong can be discovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be enquired before he can be blamed. It is not said that he told them any secrets, or assisted them by intelligence, or any other act. If he only promised to be quiet, that they in whose hands he was might free him from confinement, he did what no law of society prohibits.

The man whose miscarriage in a juſt cause has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preserve his life, by a promise of neutrality: for the stipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before; the neutrality of a captive may be always secured by his imprisonment or death. He that is at the disposal of another, may not promise to aid him in any injurious act, because no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There is reason to think that Cowley promised little. It does not appear that his compliance gained him confidence enough to be trusted without security, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himself secure, for at that diſſolution of government which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he resumed his former station, and staid till the Restoration.

"He

"He continued," says his biographer, "under these bonds till the general "deliverance;" it is therefore to be supposed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the King without the consent of his bondsman; that he did not shew his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permission.

Of the verses on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative seems to imply something encomiastick, there has been no appearance. There is a discourse concerning his government, indeed, with verses intermixed, but such as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of usurpation.

A doctor of physick however he was made at Oxford, in December 1657; and in the commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been given by Dr. Birch, he appears among the experimental philosophers with the title of Dr. Cowley.

There is no reason for supposing that he ever attempted practice; but his preparatory studies have contributed something to the honour of his country. Considering Botany as necessary to a physician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance of a favourite study affects all subordinate operations of the intellect, Botany in the mind of Cowley turned into Poetry. He composed in Latin several books on Plants, of which the first and second display the qualities of Herbs, in elegiac verse; the third and fourth, the beauties of Flowers in various measures; and in the fifth and sixth, the uses of trees in heroic numbers.

At the same time were produced from the same university, the two great poets, Cowley and Milton, of dissimilar genius, of opposite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin Poetry, in which the English, till their works and May's poem appeared*, seemed unable to contest the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton be compared (for May I hold to be superior to both) the advantage seems to lie on the side of Cowley. Milton is generally content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loss of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the Restoration, after all the diligence of his long service, and with consciousness not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and, that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a Song of Triumph. But this was a time of such general hope, that great numbers were inevitably disappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediously delayed. He had been promised by both Charles the first and second the Mastership of the Savoy; "but he lost it," says Wood, "by certain persons, enemies to the Muses."

The

* By May's Poem, we are here to understand a continuation of Lucan's Pharsalia to the death of Julius Cæsar, by Thomas May, an eminent poet and historian, who flourished in the reigns of James and Charles I, and of whom a life is given in the Biographia Britannica. M.

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having, by such alteration as he thought proper, fitted his old Comedy of the "Guardian" for the stage, he produced it * under the title of "The Cutter of Coleman-"street†." It was treated on the stage with great severity, and was afterwards censured as a satire on the King's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the first exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis, "that when they told Cowley how little favour had been shewn him, "he received the news of his ill success, not with so much firmness as might "have been expected from so great a man."

What firmness they expected, or what weakness Cowley discovered, cannot be known. He that misses his end will never be as much pleased as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himself; and when the end is to please the multitude, no man, perhaps, has a right, in things admitting of gradation and comparison, to throw the whole blame upon his judges, and totally to exclude diffidence and shame by a haughty consciousness of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play, it is difficult now to find the reason: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merriment. From the charge of disaffection he exculpates himself in his preface, by observing how unlikely it is that, having followed the royal family through all their distresses "he should choose the time of their restoration to begin a quarrel "with them." It appears, however, from the Theatrical Register of Downes the Prompter, to have been popularly considered as a satire on the royalists.

That he might shorten this tedious suspense, he published his pretensions and his discontent, in an ode called "The Complaint;" in which he stiles himself the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity.

These unlucky incidents are brought, maliciously enough, together in some stanzas, written about that time, on the choice of a laureat; a mode of satire, by which, since it was first introduced by Suckling, perhaps every generation of poets has been teazed.

Savoy-missing Cowley came into the court,
Making apologies for his bad play;
Every one gave him so good a report,
That Apollo gave heed to all he could say:
Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
Unless he had done some notable folly;
Writ verses unjustly in praise of Sam Tuke,
Or printed his pitiful Melancholy.

His

* 1663.

† Here is an error in the designation of this comedy, which our author copied from the title-page of the later editions of Cowley's works: the title of the play itself is without the artick, "Cutter of Coleman-street," and that, because a merry sharking fellow about the town, named Cutter, is a principal character in it. H.

His vehement desire of retirement now came again upon him. "Not "finding," says the morose Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which "he expected, while others for their money carried away most places, he retir- "ed discontented into Surrey."

"He was now," says the courtly Sprat, "weary of the vexations and for- "malities of an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long com- "pliance to foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court; which "sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could "make it quiet. Those were the reasons that made him to follow the violent "inclination of his own mind, which, in the greatest throng of his former "business, had still called upon him, and represented to him the true delights "of solitary studies, of temperate pleasures, and a moderate revenue below "the malice and flatteries of fortune."

So differently are things seen, and so differently are they shewn; but actions are visible, though motives are secret. Cowley certainly retired; first to Barn- elms, and afterwards to Chertsey, in Surrey. He seems, however, to have lost part of his dread of the * *hum of men.* He thought himself now safe enough from intrusion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and instead of seeking shelter in America, wisely went only so far from the bustle of life as that he might easily find his way back, when solitude should grow tedious. His retreat was at first but slenderly accommodated; yet he soon obtained, by the interest of the Earl of St. Albans and the Duke of Buckingham, such a lease of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income.

By the lover of virtue and of wit it will be solicitously asked, if he now was happy. Let them peruse one of his letters accidently preserved by Peck, which I recommend to the consideration of all that may hereafter pant for solitude.

"To Dr. Thomas Sprat.

"Chertsey, 21 May, 1665.

"The first night that I came hither I caught so great a cold, with a defluxion "of rheum, as made me keep my chamber ten days. And, two after, had such "a bruise in my ribs with a fall, that I am yet unable to move or turn myself "in my bed. This is my personal fortune here to begin with. And, besides, "I can get no money from my tenants, and have my meadows eaten up every "night by cattle put in by my neighbours. What this signifies, or may come "to in time, God knows; if it be ominous, it can end in nothing less than "hanging. Another misfortune has been, and stranger than all the rest, that "you have broke your word with me, and failed to come, even though you "told Mr. Bois that you would. That is what they call *Monstri simile.* I do hope "to recover my late hurt so far within five or six days (though it be uncertain "yet whether I shall ever recover it) as to walk about again. And, then, "methinks, you and I and *the Dean* might be very merry upon St. Anne's Hill.

* L'Allegro of Milton. Dr. J.

"You might very conveniently come hither the way of Hampton Town, lying "there one night. I write this in pain, and can say no more: *Verbum sapienti.*"

He did not long enjoy the pleasure or suffer the uneasiness of solitude; for he died at the Porch-house * in Chertsey in 1667, in the 49th year of his age.

He was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenser; and King Charles pronounced, "That Mr. Cowley had not left behind him a better man in England." He is represented by Dr. Sprat as the most amiable of mankind; and this posthumous praise may safely be credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet recent, and the minds of either party were easily irritated, was obliged to pass over many transactions in general expressions, and to leave curiosity often unsatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot however now be known. I must therefore recommend the perusal of his work, to which my narration can be considered only as a slender supplement.

COWLEY, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, instead of tracing intellectual pleasures in the minds of man, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praised, and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things subject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and fashions, and at different times take different forms. About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets; of whom, in a criticism on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give some account.

The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to shew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to shew it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.

If the father of criticim has rightly denominated poetry τέχνη μιμητική, *an imitative art*, these writers will, without great wrong, lose their right to the name of poets, for they cannot be said to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature for life; neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect.

Those however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they surpass him in poetry.

If Wit be well described by Pope, as being, "that which has been often "thought, but was never before so well expressed," they certainly never attained, nor ever sought it; for they endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts, and were careless of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is

* Now in the possession of Mr. Clark, Alderman of London. Dr. J.

undoubtedly

undoubtedly erroneous; he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language.

If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be considered as Wit, which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production acknowledged to be just; if it be that, which he that never found it wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

But Wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and illusions; their learning instructs, and their subtility surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.

From this account of their compositions it will be readily inferred, that they were not successful in representing or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on something unexpected and surprising, they had no regard to that uniformity of sentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleasures of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occasion, they should have said or done; but wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil, impassive and at leisure; as Epicurean deities making remarks on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion. Their courtship was void of fondness, and their lamentation of sorrow. Their wish was only to say what they hoped had been never said before.

Nor was the sublime more within their reach than the pathetick; for they never attempted that comprehension and expanse of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the first effect is sudden astonishment, and the second rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleness by dispersion. Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its metaphorical meaning for nicety of distinction. Those writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatness; for great things cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent, by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he, who dissects a sun-beam with a prism, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon.

What they wanted however of the sublime, they endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost: if they frequently threw away their wit upon false conceits, they likewise sometime struck out unexpected truth: If their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, nor assume the dignity of a writer, by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitation borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary similies, by readiness of rhyme, and volubility of syllables.

In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollection or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflexion and comparison are employed; and in the mass of material which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found, buried perhaps in grossness of expression but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety though less copiousness of sentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marino and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of a very extensive and various knowledge; and by Jonson, whose manner resembled that of Donne more in the ruggedness of his lines than in the cast of his sentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had undoubtedly more imitators, than time has left behind. Their immediate successors, of whom any remembrance can be said to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleiveland and Milton. Denham and Waller sought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphysick style only in his lines upon Hobson the Carrier. Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predecessors, having as much sentiment and more musick. Suckling neither improved versification, nor abounded in conceits. The fashionable style remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton disdained it.

CRITICAL REMARKS are not easily understood without examples; and I have therefore collected instances of the modes of writing by which this species of poets, for poets they were called by themselves and their admirers, were eminently distinguished.

AS the authors of this race were perhaps more desirous of being admired than understood, they sometimes drew their conceits from recesses of learning not very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley on *Knowledge*:

> The sacred tree midst the fair orchard grew;
> The phœnix Truth did on it rest,
> And built his perfum'd nest,

That

That right Porphyrian tree which did true logic shew.
Each leaf did learned notions give,
And th' apples were demonstrative:
So clear their colour and divine,
The very shade they cast did other lights outshine.

n Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age:

Love was with thy life entwin'd,
Close as heat with fire is join'd,
A powerful brand prescrib'd the date
Of thine, like Meleager's fate.
Th' antiperistasis of age
More enflam'd thy amorous rage.

the following verses we have an allusion to a Rabbinical opinion concing Manna:

Variety I ask not: give me one
To live perpetually upon.
The Person Love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taste of all in it.

hus *Donne* shews his medicinal knowledge in some encomiastick verses.

In every thing there naturally grows
A Balsamum to keep it fresh and new,
If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blows;
Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.
But you, of learning and religion,
And virtue and such ingredients, have made
A mithridate, whose operation
Keeps off, or cures what can be done or said.

hough the following lines of Donne, on the last night of the year, have ething in them too scholastic, they are not inelegant:

This twilight of two years, nor past nor next,
Some emblem is of me, or I of this,
Who, meteor-like, of stuff and form perplext,
Whose what and where in disputation is,
If I should call me any thing, should miss.
I sum the years and me, and find me not
Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new,
That cannot say, my thanks I have forgot,
Nor trust I this with hopes; and yet scarce true
This bravery is, since these times shew'd me you. DONNY.

more abtruse and profound is *Donne*'s reflection upon Man as a Microcosm.

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Something to answer in some proportion

All

All the world's riches: and in good men, this
Virtue, our form's form, and our soul's soul is.

OF thoughts so far fetched, as to be not only unexpected, but unna
their books are full.

To a Lady, who wrote poesies for rings.

They, who above do various circles find,
Say, like a ring th' æquator heaven does bind.
When heaven shall be adorn'd by thee,
(Which then more heaven than 'tis, will be)
'Tis thou must write the poesy there,
For it wanteth one as yet,
Then the sun pass through 't twice a year,
The sun, which is esteem'd the god of wit.

Co

The difficulties which have been raised about identity in philoso
by Cowley with still more perplexity applied to Love:

Five years ago, (says story) I lov'd you;
For which you call me most inconstant now;
Pardon me, madam, you mistake the man;
For I am not the same that I was then,
No flesh is now the same 'twas then in me,
And that my mind is changed yourself may see.
The same thoughts to retain still, and intents,
Were more inconstant far: for accidents
Must of all things most strangely inconstant prove,
If from one subject they t' another move:
My members then, the father members were
From whence these take their birth, which now are here.
If then this body love what th' other did,
'Twere incest, which by nature is forbid.

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry, compared to
through different countries.

Hast though not found each woman's breast
(The land where thou hast travelled)
Either by savages possest,
Or wild, and uninhabited?
What joy could'st take, or what repose,
In countries so uncivilis'd as those?
Lust, the scorching dog-star, here
Rages with immoderate heat;
Whilst Pride, the rugged Northern Bear,
In others makes the cold too great.

And where these are temperate known,
The soil 's all barren sand, or rocky stone. COWLEY.

Lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to Ægypt;

The fate of Ægypt I sustain,
And never feel the dew of rain
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moisture owe
To overflowings of the heart below. COWLEY.

e lover supposes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury and of sacrifice.

And yet this death of mine, I fear,
Will ominous to her appear:
When sound in every other part,
Her sacrifice is found without an heart,
For the last tempest of my death
Shall sigh out that too, with my breath,

it the chaos was harmonised, has been recited of old; but whence the nt sounds arose, remained for a modern to discover:

Th' ungovern'd parts no correspondence knew;
An artless war from thwarting motions grew;
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.
Water and air he for the Tenor chose,
Earth made the Base; the Treble, flame arose. COWLEY.

tears of lovers are always of great poetical account; but Donne has ed them into worlds. If the lines are not easily understood, they may d again:

On a round ball
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay,
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.
So doth each tear,
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee my heaven dissolved so.

reading the following lines, the reader may perhaps cry out—*Confusion infounded.*

Here lies a she sun, and a he moon here,
She gives the best light to his sphere,
Or each is both, and all, and so
They unto one another nothing owe. DONNE.

Who

Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a telescope?

Though God be our true glass through which we see
All, since the being of all things is he,
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive
Things in proportion fit, by perspective
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,
Virtues, indeed remote, seem to be near.

Who would imagine it possible that in a very few lines, so many remo ideas could be brought together?

Since 'tis my doom, Love's undershrieve
Why this reprieve?
Why doth my she advowson fly
Incumbency?
To sell thyself dost thou intend
By candle's end,
And hold the contrast thus in doubt,
Life's taper out?
Think but how soon the market fails,
Your sex lives faster than the males;
And if to measure age's span,
The sober Julian were th' account of man,
Whilst you live by the fleet Gregorian.

CLEIVELAND.

OF enormous and disgusting hyperboles, these may be examples:

By every wind that comes this way,
Send me at least a sigh or two,
Such and so many I'll repay
As shall themselves make winds to get you.

COWLEY.

In tears I'll waste these eyes,
By Love so vainly fed;
So lust of old the Deluge punished.

COWLEY.

All arm'd in brass the richest dress of war,
(A dismal glorious sight) he shone afar.
The sun himself started with sudden fright,
To see his beams return so dismal bright.

COWLEY.

An universal consternation:

His bloody eyes he hurls round, his sharp paws
Tear up the ground; then runs he wild about,
Lashing his angry tail and rearing out.

Beast

Beasts creep into their dens, and tremble there;
Trees, though no wind is stirring, shake with fear:
Silence and horror fill the place around:
Echo itself dare scarce repeat the sound.

COWLEY.

THEIR fictions were often violent and unnatural.

Of his Mistress bathing.

The fish around her crouded, as they do
To the false light that treacherous fisher's shew,
And all with as much ease might taken be,
As she at first took me:
For ne'er did light so clear
Among the waves appear,
Though every night the sun himself set there.

COWLEY.

The poetical effect of a lover's name upon glass:

My name engrav'd herein
Doth contribute my firmness to this glass;
Which, ever since that charm, hath been
As hard as that which grav'd it was.

DONNE.

Their conceits were sometimes slight and trifling.

On an inconstant woman:

He enjoys the calmy sunshine now,
And no breath stirring hears,
In the clear heaven of thy brow,
No smallest cloud appears.
He sees thee gentle, fair and gay,
And trusts the faithless April of thy May.

COWLEY.

Upon a paper written with the juice of a lemon, and read by the fire:

Nothing yet in thee is seen,
But when a genial heat warms thee within,
A new-born wood of various lines there grows;
Here buds an L, and there a B,
Here sprouts a V, and there a T,
And all the flourishing letters stand in rows.

COWLEY.

As they sought only for novelty, they did not much enquire whether their allusions were to things high or low, elegant or gross; whether they compared the little to the great, or the great to the little.

### Physick and Chirurgery for a Lover.

Gently, ah gently, Madam, touch
The wound, which you yourself have made:
That pain must needs be very much,
Which makes me of your hand afraid.
Cordials of pity give me now,
For I too weak of purgings grow.

COWLEY.

### The World and a Clock.

Mahol, th' inferior world's fantastic face,
Thro' all the turns of matter's maze did trace;
Great Nature's well-set clock in pieces took;
On all the springs and smallest wheels did look
Of life and motion, and with equal art
Made up the whole again of every part.

COWLEY.

A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but that it may not want its due honour, Cleiveland has paralleled it with the Sun:

The moderate value of our guiltless ore
Makes no man atheist, and no woman whore;
Yet why should hallow'd vestal's sacred shrine
Deserve more honour than a flaming mine?
These pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be,
Than a few embers, for a deity.
Had he our pits, the Persian would admire
No sun, but warm's devotion at our fire:
He'd leave the trotting whipster, and prefer
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that waggoner.
For wants he heat, or light? or would have store
Or both? 'tis here: and what can suns give more?
Nay, what's the sun but, in a different name,
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!
Then let this truth reciprocally run,
The sun's heaven's coalery, and coals our sun.

### Death, a Voyage:

No family
E'er rigg'd a soul for heaven's discovery,
With whom more venturers might boldly dare
Venture their stakes, with him in joy to share.

DONNE.

Their thoughts and expressions were sometimes grosly abused, and such as no figures or licence can reconcile to the understanding.

A Lover

A Lover neither dead nor alive:

Then down I laid my head
Down on cold earth; and for a while was dead,
And my freed soul to a strange somewhere fled:
Ah, sottish soul, said I,
When back to its cage again I saw it fly;
Fool to resume her broken chain!
And row her galley here again.
Fool, to that body to return
Where it condemn'd and destin'd is to burn!
Once dead, how can it be,
Death should a thing so pleasant seem to thee,
That thou should'st come to live it o'er again in me?

A Lover's heart, a hand grenado.

Woe to her stubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the self-same room,
'Twill tear and blown up all within,
Like a grenado shot into a magazin.
Then shall Love keep the ashes, and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts:
Shall out of both one new one make:
From her's th' allay; from mine, the metal take.

COWLEY.

The poetical Propagation of Light:

The Prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,
From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall;
Then from those wombs of stars, the Bride's bright eyes,
At every glance a constellation flies
And sowes the court with stars, and doth prevent
In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament:
First her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels lustres rise;
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good desire.

DONNE.

THEY were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of s, and therefore miss the notice and the praise which are often gained by , who think less, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.

hat a Mistress beloved is fairer in idea than in reality, is by Cowley thus essed:

Thou in my fancy dost much higher stand,
Than women can be plac'd by Nature's hand;

And I must needs, I'm sure, a loser be,
To change thee, as thou'rt there, for very thee.

That prayer and labour should co-operate, are thus taught by Donne:

In none but us, are such mixt engines found,
As hands of double office; for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raise;
Who prayerless labours, or, without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's one.

By the same author, a common topick, the danger of procrastination, is th illustrated:

——That which I should have begun
In my youth's morning, now late must be done;
And I, as giddy travellers must do,
Which stray or sleep all day, and having lost
Light and strength, dark and tir'd, must then ride post

All that man has to do is to live and die; the sum of humanity is com prehended by Donne in the following lines:

Think in how poor a prison thou didst lie;
After enabled but to suck and cry,
Think, when 'twas grown to most, 'twas a poor inn,
A province pack'd up in two yards of skin,
And that usurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage
Of sicknesses, or their true mother, age.
But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;
Thou hast thy expansion now, and liberty;
Think, that a rusty piece discharg'd is flown
In pieces, and the bullet is his own.
And freely flies: this to thy soul allow,
Think thy shell broke, think thy soul hatch'd but now.

THEY were sometimes indelicate and disgusting. Cowley thus apostr phises beauty:

——Thou tyrant, which leav'st no man free!
Thou subtle thief, from whom nought safe can be!
Thou murtherer, which hast kill'd, and devil, which wouldst damn m

Thus he addresses his Mistress:

Thou who, in many a propriety,
So truly art the sun to me,
Add one more likeness, which I'm sure you can,
And let me and my sun beget a man.

Thus he represents the meditations of a Lover:

Though in thy thoughts scarce any tracts have been
So much as of original sin, Su

Such charms thy beauty wears as might
Desires in dying confest saints excite.
Thou with strange adultery
Dost in each breast a brothel keep;
Awake, all men do lust for thee,
And some enjoy thee when they sleep.

The true Taste of Tears.

Hither with crystal vials, lovers, come,
And take my tears, which are love's wine,
And try your mistress' tears at home;
For all are false, that taste not just like mine.

DONNE.

his is yet more indelicate:

As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,
As that which from chaf'd musk-cat's pores doth trill,
As the almighty balm of th' early East,
Such are the sweet drops of my mistress' breast.
And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,
They seem no sweat-drops, but pearl coronets;
Rank sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles.

DONNE.

HEIR expressions sometimes raise horror, when they intend perhaps to be tic:

As men in hell are from diseases free,
So from all other ills am I,
Free from their known formality:
But all pains eminently lie in thee.

COWLEY.

HEY were not always strictly curious, whether the opinions from which drew their illustrations were true; it was enough that they were popular. n remarks, that some falsehoods are continued by tradition, because they ly commodious allusions.

It gave a piteous groan, and so it broke;
In vain it something would have spoke:
The love too strong for 't was,
Like poison put into a Venice-glass.

COWLEY.

forming descriptions, they looked out not for images, but for conceits. t has been a common subject, which poets have contended to adorn. en's Night is well known; Donne's is as follows:

Thou seest me here at midnight, now all rest:
Time's dead low-water; when all minds divest

To-morrow's

To-morrow's business, when the labourers have
Such rest in bed, that their last church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will scarce be a type of this,
Now, when the client, whose last hearing is
To-morrow, sleeps; when the condemned man,
Who when he opes his eyes, must shut them then
Again by death, although sad watch he keep,
Doth practise dying by a little sleep,
Thou at this midnight seest me.

It must be however confessed of these writers, that if they are upon c mon subjects often unnecessarily and unpoetically subtle; yet where s lastick speculation can be properly admitted, their copiousness and acute may be justly admired. What Cowley has written upon Hope, shew unequalled fertility of invention:

Hope, whose weak being ruin'd is,
Alike if it succed, and if it miss;
Whom good or ill does equally confound,
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound.
Vain shadow, which dost vanquish quite,
Both at full noon and perfect night!
The stars have not a possibility
Of blessing thee;
If things then from their end we happy call,
'Tis Hope is the most hopeless thing of all.
Hope, thou bold taster of delight,
Who, whilst thou should'st but taste, devour'st it quite!
Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor,
By clogging it with legacies before!
The joys which we entire should wed,
Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;
Good fortunes without gain imported be,
Such mighty custom's paid to thee:
For joy, like wine, kept close does better taste;
If it take air before, its spirits waste.

To the following comparison of a man that travels, and his wife that st at home, with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity ingenuity has the better claim:

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expanson,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.
If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin-compasses are two,
Thy soul the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

A

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot obliquely run.
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end, where I began.

DONNE.

ll these exam les it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious, is pro- by a voluntary deviation from nature in pursuit of something new and e; and that the writers fail to give delight, by their desire of exciting ation.

VING thus endeavoured to exhibit a general representation of the style ntiments of the metaphysical poets, it is now proper to examine par- ly the works of Cowley, who was almost the last of that race, and un- dly the best.

Miscellanies contain a collection of short compositions, written some as ere dictated by a mind at leisure, and some as they were called forth by nt occasions; with great variety of style and sentiment, from burlesque to awful grandeur. Such an assemblage of diversified excellence no poet has hitherto afforded. To choose the best, among many good, is one most hazardous attempts of criticism. I know not whether Scaliger f has persuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the vourite odes, which he estimates in his raptures at the value of a king- I will however venture to recommend Cowley's first piece, which ought nscribed *To my muse*, for want of which the second couplet is without ice. When the title is added, there will still remain a defect; for every ought to contain in itself whatever is necessary to make it intelligible. as some epitaphs without names; which are therefore epitaphs to be ccupied indeed for the present, but hardly appropriated.

ode on Wit is almost without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley Wit, which had been till then used for *Intellection*, in contradistinction to ook the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

all the passages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none sily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condemns rance of Wit:

Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
That shews more cost than art.
Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear;
Rather than all things wit, let none be there.
Several lights will not be seen,
If there be nothing else between.
Men doubt, because they stand so thick i' th' sky,
If those be stars which paint the galaxy.

In

In his verses to Lord Falkland, whom every man of his time was proud to praise, there are, as there must be in all Cowley's compositions, some striking thoughts; but they are not well wrought. His elegy on Sir Henry Wotton is vigorous and happy, the series of thoughts is easy and natural, and the conclusion though a little weakened by the intrusion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this Elegy, and in most of his encomiastic poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Harvey, there is much praise, but little passion. a very just and ample delineation of such virtues as a studious privacy admits, and such intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can display. He knew how to distinguish, and how to commend the qualities of his companion; but when he wishes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himself, and diverts his sorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would *crackle* in the *fire*. It is the odd fate of this thought to be worse for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as therefore this property was not assigned it by chance, the mind must be thought sufficiently at ease that could attend to such minuteness of physiology. But the power of Cowley is not so much to move the affections, as to exercise the understanding.

The *Chronicle* is a composition unrivalled and alone: such gaiety of fancy, such facility of expression, such varied similitude, such a succession of images, and such a dance of words, it is in vain to expect except from Cowley. His strength always appears in his agility, his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elastic mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moralist, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To such a performance Suckling could have brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have supplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The verses to Davenant, which are vigorously begun, and happily concluded, contain some hints of criticism very justly conceived and happily expressed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been sufficiently observed: the few decisions and remarks which his prefaces and his notes on the Davideis supply, were at that time accessions to English literature, and shew such skill as raises our wish for more examples.

The lines from Jersey are a very curious and pleasing specimen of the familiar descending to the burlesque.

His two metrical disquisitions *for* and *against* Reason, are no mean specimens of metaphysical poetry. The stanzas against knowledge produce little conviction. In those which are intended to exalt the human faculties, Reason has its proper task assigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verses *for* Reason is a passage which Bentley, in the only English verses which he is known to have written, seems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

> The holy Book like the eighth sphere doth shine
> With thousand lights of truth divine,
> So numberless the stars that to our eye
> It makes all but one galaxy:

Yet

Yet Reason must assist too; for in seas
So vast and dangerous as these,
Our course by stars above we cannot know
Without the compass too below.

After this, says Bentley *:

Who travels in religious jars,
Truth mix'd with error, shade with rays,
Like Whiston wanting pyx or stars,
In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

Cowley seems to have had, what Milton is believed to have wanted, the skill to rate his own performances by their just value, and has therefore closed his Miscellanies with the verses upon Crashaw, which apparently excell all that have gone before them, and in which there are beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.

To the Miscellanies succeeded the *Anacreontiques*, or paraphrastical translations of some little poems, which pass, however justly, under the name of Anacreon. Of those songs dedicated to festivity and gaiety, in which even the morality is voluptuous, and which teach nothing but the enjoyment of the present day, he has given rather a pleasing than a faithful representation, having retained their sprightliness, but lost their simplicity. The Anacreon of Cowley, like the Homer of Pope, has admitted the decoration of some modern graces, by which he is undoubtedly more amiable to common readers, and perhaps, if they would honestly declare their own perceptions, to far the greater part of those whom courtesy and ignorance are content to style the Learned.

These little pieces will be found more finished in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction shews nothing of the mould of time, and the sentiments are at no great distance from our present habitudes of thought. Real mirth must be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the same: the dialogue of comedy, when it is transcribed from popular manners and real life, is read from age to age with equal pleasure. The artifices of inversion, by which the established order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words or new meanings of words are introduced, is practised, not by those who talk to be understood, but by those who write to be admired.

The Anacreontiques therefore of Cowley give now all the pleasure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power seems to have been greatest in the familiar and the festive.

The next class of his poems is called *The Mistress*, of which it is not necessary to select any particular pieces for praise or censure. They have all the same beauties and faults, and nearly in the same proportion. They are written with

* Dodsley's Collection of Poems, vol. V. E.

exuberance of wit, and with copiousness of learning; and it is truly asse by Sprat, that the plenitude of the writer's knowledge flows in upon his p so that the reader is commonly surprised into some improvement. But, c sidered as the verses of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much c mend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry fondness. His praises are too far sought, and too hyperbolical, either to press love, or to excite it; every stanza is crowded with darts and flames, v wounds and death, with mingled souls, and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which *The Mistress* is filled with conceits is v copiously described by Addison. Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, pressed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fi said of love, or figurative fire, the same word in the same sentence retair both significations. Thus, "observing the cold regard of his mistress's e "and at the same time their power of producing love in him, he consi "them as burning glasses made of ice. Finding himself able to live in "greatest extremities of love, he concludes the torrid zone to be habita "Upon the dying of a tree, on which he had cut his loves, he observes, t "his flames had burnt up and withered the tree."

These conceits Addison calls mixt wit; that is, wit which consists of thou true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other. Addison's re sentation is sufficiently indulgent. That confusion of images may entert for a moment; but being unnatural, it soon grows wearisome. Cowley lighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but not to mention the ancie he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy. Thus Sannazaro:

Aspice quam variis distringar Lesbia curis!
Uror, & heu! nostro manat ab igne liquor;
Sum Nilus, sumque Ætna simul; restringite flammas
O lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe flamma meas.

One of the severe theologians of that time censured him as having publis *a book of profane and lascivious Verses.* From the charge of profaneness, the c stant tenour of his life, which seems to have been eminently virtuous, and general tendency of his opinions which discover no irreverence of religi must defend him; but that the accusation of lasciviousness is unjust, the perv of his works will sufficiently evince.

Cowley's *Mistress* has no power of seduction: "she plays round the he "but reaches not the heart." Her beauty and absence, her kindness and cr ue her disdain and inconstancy, produce no correspondence of emotion. poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not perv with more sluggish frigidity. The compositions are such as might have b written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymer v had only heard of another sex; for they turn the mind only on the wri whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his task, we so times esteem as learned, and sometimes despise as trifling, always admire ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindarique Odes are now to be considered; a species of composition, which Cowley thinks Pancirolus might have counted *in his list of the lost inventions of antiquity*, and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover

The purpose with which he has paraphrased an Olympic and Nemæan Ode, is by himself sufficiently explained. His endeavour was, not to shew *precisely what Pindar spoke, but his manner of speaking.* He was therefore not at all restrained to his expressions, nor much to his sentiments; nothing was required of him, but not to write as Pindar would not have written.

Of the Olympic Ode the beginning is, I think, above the original in elegance, and the conclusion below it in strength. The connection is supplied with great perspicuity, and the thoughts, which to a reader of less skill seem thrown together by chance, are concatenated without any abruption. Though the English ode cannot be called a translation, it may be very properly consulted as a commentary.

The spirit of Pindar is indeed not every where equally preserved. The following pretty lines are not such as his *deep mouth* was used to pour:

Great Rhea's son,
If in Olympus' top where thou
Sitt'st to behold thy sacred show,
If in Alpheus' silver flight,
If in my verse thou take delight,
My verse, great Rhea's son, which is
Lofty as that, and smooth as this.

In the Nemean ode the reader must, in mere justice to Pindar, observe that whatever is said of *the original new moon, her tender forehead and her horns*, is superadded by his paraphrast, who has many other plays of words and fancy unsuitable to the original, as,

The table, free for every guest,
No doubt will thee admit,
And feast more upon thee, than thou on it.

He sometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them. In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a single word, and Cowley spends three lines in swearing by the *Castalian Stream.* We are told of Theron's bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming prose:

But in this thankless world the giver
Is envied even by the receiver;
'Tis now the cheap and frugal fashion
Rather to hide than own the obligation;
Nay, 'tis much worse than so;
It now an artifice does grow
Wrongs and injuries to do,
Lest men should think we owe.

It is hard to conceive that a man of the first rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out such minute morality in such feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooses his own subjects, he sometimes rises to dignity truly Pindarick; and, if some deficiencies of language be forgiven, his strains are such as those of the Theban Bard were to his contemporaries:

Begin the song, and strike the living lyre:
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance,
And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance;
While the dance lasts, how long soe'er it be,
My musick's voice shall bear it company;
Till all gentle notes be drown'd
In the last trumpet's dreadful sound.

After such enthusiasm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like these:

But stop, my Muse—
Hold thy Pindaric Pegasus closely in,
Which does to rage begin—
—'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse;
'Twill no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure.

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that of pursuing his thoughts to the last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little; what little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus from the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration; and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the ode intituled *The Muse*, which goes to *take the air* in an intellectual chariot, to which he harnesses Fancy and Judgment, Wit and Eloquence, Memory and Invention: how he distinguishes Wit from Fancy, or how Memory could properly contribute to Motion, has not explained; we are however content to suppose that he could have justified his own fiction, and wish to see the Muse begin her career; but there is yet more to be done.

Let the *postilion* Nature mount, and let
The *coachman* Art be set;
And let the airy *footmen*, running all beside,
Make a long row of goodly pride;
Figures, conceits, raptures, and sentences,
In a well-worded dress,
And innocent loves, and pleasant truths, and useful lies,
In all their gaudy *liveries*.

Every mind is now distinguished with this cumber of magnificence; I cannot refuse myself the four next lines:

Mo

Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,
And bid it to put on;
For long though cheerful is the way,
And life alas allows but one ill winter's day.

n the same ode, celebrating the power of the Muse, he gives her prescience, in poetical language, the foresight of events hatching in futurity; but having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to shew us that he knows what an egg contains:

Thou into the close nests of Time dost peep,
And there with a piercing eye
Through the firm shell and the thick white dost spy
Years to come a-forming lie,
Close in their sacred fecundine asleep.

e same thought is more generally, and therefore more poetically, expressed by Casimir, a writer, who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley:

Omnibus mundi Dominator horis
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,
Pars adhuc nido latet, & futuros
Crescit in annos.

ley, whatever was his subject, seems to have been carried by a kind of desire to the light and the familiar, or to conceits which require still more ignoble exertions. A slaughter in the Red Sea *new dies the waters name*; and England, in the Civil War, was *Albion no more, nor to be named from white.* It is surely the fascination not easily surmounted, that a writer professing to revive *the best and highest writing in verse*, makes this address to the new year:

Nay, if thou lov'st me, gentle year,
Let not so much as love be there,
Vain fruitless love I mean; for, gentle year,
Although I fear,
There's of this caution little need,
Yet, gentle year, take heed
How thou dost make
Such a mistake;
Such love I mean alone
As by thy cruel predecessors has been shewn;
For, though I have too much cause to doubt it,
I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it.

reader of this will be inclined to cry out with Prior—

*Ye Critics, say,*
*How poor to this was Pindar's style!*

hose who cannot perhaps find in the Isthmian or Nemæan songs what ity has disposed them to expect, will at last see that they are ill represented

sented by such puny poetry; and all will determine that, if this be the old Theban strain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the disproportion and incongruity of Cowley's sentiments must be added the uncertainty and looseness of his measures. He takes the liberty of using in any place a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve. The verses of Pindar have, as he observes, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet by examining the syllables we perceive them to be regular, and have reason enough for supposing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the sound. The imitator ought therefore to have adopted what he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preserved a constant return of the same numbers, and to have supplied smoothness of transition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat, that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing* which makes *that kind of poesy fit for all manner of subjects*. But he should have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If the Pindarick style be, what Cowley thinks it, *the highest and noblest kind of writing in verse*, it can be adapted only to high and noble subjects; and it will not be easy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the highest kind of writing in verse, which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to prose.*

This lax and lawless versification so much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle, that it immediately overspread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fashion, and they that could do nothing else could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and disorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem * on the Sheldonian Theatre, in which all kinds of verse are shaken together, is unhappily inserted in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*. Pindarism prevailed above half a century; but at last died gradually away, and other imitations supply its place.

The Pindarique Odes have so long enjoyed the highest degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to dismiss them with unabated censure; and surely though the mode of their composition be erroneous, yet many parts deserve at least that admiration which is due to great comprehension of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often striking; but the greatness of one part is disgraced by the littleness of another; and total negligence of language gives the noblest conceptions the appearance of a fabric august in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet surely those verses are not without a just claim to praise; of which it may be said with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

* First published in quarto, 1669, under the title of "Carmen Pindaricum in Theatrum "Sheldonianum in solennibus magnifici Operis Encœniis. Recitatum Julii die 9, Anno 1669, "a Corbetto Owen, A. B. Æd. Chr. Alumno Authore." E.

The

e Davideis now remains to be considered; a poem which the author de- to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no scruple of ng, because the Æneid had that number; but, he had leisure or per- ıce only to write the third part. Epick poems have been left unfinished gil, Statius, Spenser, and Cowley. That we have not the whole Davideis ever, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, at least, confessed to have miscarried. There are not many examples great a work, produced by an author generally read, and generally l, that has crept through a century with so little regard. Whatever is Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the Davideis no mention is it never appears in books, nor emerges in conversation. By the *Spectator* been once quoted; by *Rymer* it has once been praised: and by *Dryden*, lac Flecknoe," it has once been imitated; nor do I recollect much other from its publication till now, in the whole succession of English literature. this silence and neglect, if the reason be inquired, it will be found partly choice of the subject, and partly in the performance of the work.

ed History has been always read with submissive reverence, and an im- ion over-awed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in kedness and simplicity of the authentic narrative, and to repose on its ty with such humble confidence, as suppresses curiosity. We go with the an as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is us and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the pur- of religion, seems not only useless, but in some degree profane.

h events as were produced by the visible interposition of Divine Power ove the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, er it may teem with images, is best described with little diffusion of lan- : *He spake the word, and they were made.*

are told that Saul *was troubled with an evil spirit*; from this Cowley takes portunity of describing hell, and telling the history of Lucifer, who was, s,

> Once general of a gilded host of sprites,
> Like Hesper leading forth the spangled nights;
> But down like lightning, which him struck, he came,
> And roar'd at his first plunge into the flame.

ifer makes a speech to the inferior agents of mischief, in which there is ning of heathenism, and therefore of impropriety; and, to give efficacy words, concludes by lashing *his breast with his long tail.* Envy, after a steps out, and among other declarations of her zeal utters these lines;

> Do thou but treat, loud storms shall make reply,
> And thunder echo to the trembling sky,
> Whilst raging seas swell to so bold an height,
> As shall the fire's proud element affright,
> Th' old drudging Sun, from his long-beaten way,
> Shall at thy voice start, and misguide the day.

The

The jocund orbs shall break their measur'd pace,
And stubborn poles change their allotted place.
Heaven's gilded troops shall flutter here and there,
Leaving their boasting songs tun'd to a sphere,

Every reader feels himself weary with this useless talk of an allegorical F

It is not only when the events are confessedly miraculous, that fanc fiction lose their effect. the whole system of life, while the Theocracy w visible, has an appearance so different from all other scenes of human ac that the reader of the Sacred Volume habitually considers it as the pe mode of existence of a distinct species of mankind, that lived and acted manners uncommunicable; so that it is difficult even for imaginatio place us in the state of them whose story is related, and by consequence joys and griefs are not easily adopted, nor can the attention be often inter in any thing that befalls them.

To the subject thus originally indisposed to the reception of poetical bellishments, the writer brought little that could reconcile impatience, or at curiosity. Nothing can be more disgusting than a narrative spangled conceits, and conceits are all that the Davideis supplies.

One of the great sources of poetical delight is description, or the pow presenting pictures to the mind. Cowley gives inferences instead of im and shews not what may be supposed to have been seen, but what thou the sight might have suggested. When Virgil describes the stone which Tu lifted against Æneas, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

Saxum circumspicit ingens,
Saxum antiquum, ingens, campo quod forte jacebat
Limes agro positus, litem ut discerneret arvis.

Cowley says of the stone with which Cain slew his brother,

I saw him fling the stone, as if he meant
At once his murther and his monument.

Of the sword taken from Goliah, he says,

A sword so great, that it was only fit
To cut off his great head that came with it.

Other poets describe death by some of its common appearances. Co says, with a learned allusion to sepulchral lamps real or fabulous,

'Twixt his right ribs deep pierc'd the furious blade,
And open'd wide those secret vessels where
Life's light goes out, when first they let in air,

But he has allusions vulgar as well as learned. In a visionary succession of ki

Joas at first does bright and glorious show,
In life's fresh morn his fame does early crow.

Describing an undisciplined army, after having said with elegance,

His forces seem'd no army, but a crowd
Heartless, unarm'd, disorderly, and loud,

he gives them a fit of the ague.

e allusions, however, are not always to vulgar things: he offends by
gration as much as by diminution:

The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head
A well-wrought heaven of silk and gold was spread.

atever he writes is always polluted with some conceit:

Where the sun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
Where he the growth of fatal gold does see,
Gold, which alone more influence has than he.

ne passage he starts a sudden question, to the confusion of philosophy:

Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,
Why does that twining plant the oak embrace?
The oak for courtship most of all unfit,
And rough as are the winds that fight with it.

expressions have sometimes a degree of meanness that surpasses
ation:

Nay, gentle guests, he cries, since now your 're in,
The story of your gallant friend begin.

simile descriptive of the Morning:

As glimmering stars just at th' approach of day,
Cashier'd by troops, at last drop all away.

dress of Gabriel deserves attention:

He took for skin a cloud most soft and bright,
Than e'er the midday sun pierc'd through with light,
Upon his cheeks a lively blush he spread,
Wash'd from the morning beauties deepest red,
An harmless flattering meteor shone for hair,
And fell adown his shoulders with loose care;
He cuts out a silk mantle from the skies,
Where the most sprightly azure pleas'd the eyes:
This he with starry vapours sprinkles all,
Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;
Of a new rainbow ere it fret or fade,
The choicest piece cut out, a scarfe is made.

is a just specimen of Cowley's imagery: what might in general expres-
great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it
all parts. That Gabriel was invested with the softest or brightest colours
cy, we might have been told, and been dismissed to improve the idea in
erent proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he
ted where Gabriel got first his skin, and then his mantle, then his lace,
n his scarfe, and related it in the terms of the mercer and the taylor.
times he indulges himself in a digression, always conceived with his
exuberance, and commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it
is:

I' th' library a few choice authors stood,
Yet 'twas well stor'd, for that small store was good;
Writing, man's spiritual physic, was not then
Itself, as now, grown a disease of men.
Learning (young virgin) but few suitors knew;
The common prostitute she lately grew,
And with the spurious brood loads now the press;
Laborious effects of idleness.

As the Davideis affords only four books, though intended to consist of twelve, there is no opportunity for such criticisms as Epick poems commonly supply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly shewn by the third part. The duration of an unfinished action cannot be known. Of characters either not yet introduced, or shewn but upon few occasions, the full extent and the nice discriminations cannot be ascertained. The fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the Odyssey than the Iliad: and many artifices of diversification are employed, with the skill of a man acquainted with the best models. The past is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by vision: but he has been so lavish of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practising again the same modes of disposing his matter; and perhaps the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to stop. By this abruption, posterity lost more instruction than delight. If the continuation of the Davideis can be missed, it is for the learning that had been diffused over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved like every other part by improper decorations, they would have deserved uncommon praise. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero:

His way once chose, he forward thrust outright,
Nor turn'd aside for danger or delight.

And the different beauties of the lofty Merah and the gentle Michol are very justly conceived and strongly painted.

Rymer has declared the Davideis superior to the *Jerusalem of Tasso*, "which," says he, "the poet, with all his care, has not totally purged from pedantry." If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular sciences and studies, in opposition to the general notions supplied by a wide survey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry far more frequently than Tasso. I know not, indeed, why they should be compared; for the resemblance of Cowley's work to Tasso's is only that they both exhibit the agency of celestial and infernal spirits, in which however they differ widely; for Cowley supposes them to operate commonly upon the mind by suggestion; Tasso represents them as promoting or obstructing events by external agency.

Of particular passages that can be properly compared, I remember only the description of Heaven, in which the different manner of the two writers is

is sufficiently discernible. Cowley's is scarcely description, unless it be possible to describe by negatives; for he tells us only what there is not in heaven. Tasso endeavours to represent the splendours and pleasures of the regions of happiness. Tasso affords images, and Cowley sentiments. It happens, however, that Tasso's description affords some reason for Rymer's censure. He says of the Supreme Being,

Hà sotto i piedi e fato e la natura
Ministri humili, e'l moto, e ch'il misura.

The second line has in it more of pedantry than perhaps can be found in any other stanza of the poem.

In the perusal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably squandered. Attention has no relief, the affections are never moved; we are sometimes surprised, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind capacious by nature, and replenished by study.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetick, and rarely sublime, but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is said by Denham in his elegy,

To him no author was unknown;
Yet what he writ was all his own.

This wide position requires less limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than perhaps of any other poet.—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

His character of writing was indeed not his own: he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise, and not sufficiently enquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows.

He was in his own time considered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon represents him as having taking a flight beyond all that went before him; and Milton is said to have declared, that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakspeare, and Cowley,

His manner he had in common with others: but his sentiments were his own. Upon every subject he thought for himself: and such was his copiousness of knowledge, that something at once remote and applicable rushed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely because another had used it: his known wealth was so great, that he might have borrowed without loss of credit.

In his elegy on Sir Henry Wotton, the last lines have such resemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius upon the death of Scaliger, that I cannot but think them copied from it, though they are copied by no servile hand.

One passage in his *Mistress* is so apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts, so as that he did not perceive himself taking it from another:

Although I think thou never found wilt be,
Yet I'm resolved to search for thee;
The search itself rewards the pains.
So, though the chymist his great secret miss,
(For neither it in Art nor Nature is)
Yet things well worth his toil he gains:
And does his charge and labour pay
With good unsought experiments by the way.

COWLEY.

Some that have deeper digg'd Love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie:
I have lov'd, and got, and told;
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery;
Oh, 'tis imposture all:
And as no chymic yet th' elixir got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot,
If by the way to him befal
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.

Jonson and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the highest esteem.

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledges his obligation to the learning and industry of Jonson; but I have found no traces of Jonson in his works: to emulate Donne, appears to have been his purpose; and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light allusion to sacred things, by which readers far short of sanctity are frequently offended; and which would not be borne in the present age, when devotion, perhaps not more fervent, is more delicate.

Having produced one passage taken by Cowley from Donne, I will recompense him by another which Milton seems to have borrowed from him. He says of Goliah,

His spear, the trunk was of a lofty tree,
Which Nature meant some tall ship's mast should be.

Milton of Satan:

His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great admiral, were but a wand,
He walked with.

His

His diction was in his own time censured as negligent. He seems not to have known, or not to have considered, that words being arbitrary must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them. Language is the dress of thought: and as the noblest mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rusticks or mechanieks; so the most heroick sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Truth indeed is always truth, and reason is always reason; they have an intrinsick and unalterable value, and constitute that intellectual gold which defies destruction: but gold may be so concealed in baser matter, that only a chymist can recover it; sense may be so hidden in unrefined and plebeian words, that none but philosophers can distinguish it; and both may be so buried in impurities, as not to pay the cost of their extraction.

The diction, being the vehicle of the thoughts, first presents itself to the intellectual eye: and if the first appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often sought. Whatever professes to benefit by pleasing, must please at once. The pleasures of the mind imply something sudden and unexpected; that which elevates must always surprise. What is perceived by slow degrees may gratify us with consciousness of improvement, but will never strike with the sense of pleasure.

Of all this, Cowley appears to have been without knowledge, or without care. He makes no selection of words, nor seeks any neatness of phrase: he has no elegance either lucky or elaborate; as his endeavours were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy, he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety of nice adaption. It seems to follow from the necessity of the subject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroic poem is less familiar than that of his lightest writings. He has given not the same numbers, but the same diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempestuous Pindar.

His versification seems to have had very little of his care; and if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmusical only when they are ill read, the art of reading them is at present lost; for they are commonly harsh to modern ears. He has indeed many noble lines, such as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts sometimes swelled his verse to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he sinks willingly down to his general carelessness, and avoids with very little care either meanness or asperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harsh:

> One flings a mountain, and its rivers too
> Torn up with't.

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns or particles, or the like unimportant words, which disappoint the ear, and destroy the energy of the line.

His

His combinations of different measures is sometimes dissonant and unpleasin he joins verses together, of which the former does not slide easily into the latt

The words *do* and *did*, which so much degrade in present estimation t line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little censured or avoide how often he used them, and with how bad an effect, at least to our ea will appear by a passage, in which every reader will lament to see just an noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegance of language:

Where honour or where conscience *does* not blind,
No other law shall shackle me:
Slave to myself I ne'er will be;
Nor shall my future actions be confin'd
By my own present mind.
Who by resolves and vows engag'd *does* stand
For days, that yet belong to fate,
*Does* like an unthrift mortgage his estate,
Before it falls into his hand,
The bondman of the cloister so,
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe.
And still as Time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!
Unhappy slave, and pupil to a bell!
Which his hour's work as well as hours *does* tell:
Unhappy till the last, the kind releasing knell.

His heroic lines are often formed of monosyllables; but yet they are som times sweet and sonorous.

He says of the Messiah,

Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,
*And reach to worlds that must not yet be found.*

In another place, of David,

Yet bid him go securely, when he sends;
*'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.*
*The man who has his God, no aid can lack;*
*And we who bid him go, will bring him back.*

Yet amidst his negligence he sometimes attempted an improved and scie tific versification; of which it will be best to give his own account subjoin to this line,

Nor can the glory contain itself in th' endless space.

"I am sorry that it is necessary to admonish the most part of readers, tha "is not by negligence that this verse is so loose, long, and, as it were, va "it is to paint in the number the nature of the thing which it describes, wh "I would have observed in divers other places of this poem, that else will p "for very careleſs-verses: as before,

*And over-runs the neighb'ring fields with violent course.* "

"In the second book;

*Down a precipice deep, down he casts them all.—*

"—And,

*And fell a-down his shoulders with loose care.*

"In the third,

*Brass was his helmet, his boots brass, and o're*
*His breast a thick plate of strong brass he wore.*

"In the fourth,

*Like some fair pine o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.*

"And,

*Some from the rocks cast themselves down headlong,*

"And many more: but it is enough to instance in a few. The thing is, that "the disposition of words and numbers should be such, as that, out of the "order and sound of them, the things themselves may be represented. This "the Greeks were not so accurate as to bind themselves to; neither have our "English poets observed it, for aught I can find. The Latins (*qui musas colunt severiores*) sometimes did it; and their prince, Virgil, always: in whom the "examples are innumerable, and taken notice of by all judicious men, so that "it is superfluous to collect them.

I know not whether he has, in many of these instances, attained the representation or resemblance that he proposes. Verse can imitate only sound and motion. A *boundless* verse, a *headlong* verse, and a verse of *brass* or of *strong brass*, seem to comprise very incongruous and unsociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the sound of the line expressing *loose care*, I cannot discover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an Alexandrine than in ten syllables.

But, not to defraud him of his due praise, he has given one example of representative versification, which perhaps no other English line can equal:

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise:
He, who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting stay
Till the whole strerm that stopp'd him shall be gone,
*Which runs, and as it runs, for ever shall run on.*

Cowley was, I believe, the first poet that mingled Alexandrines at pleasure with the common heroic of ten syllables, and from him Dryden borrowed the practice, whether ornamental or licentious. He considered the verse of twelve syllables as elevated and majestick, and has therefore deviated into that measure when he supposes the voice heard of the Supreme Being.

The Author of the Davideis is commended by Dryden for having written in couplets, because he discovered that any staff was too lyrical for an heroic poem; but this seems to have been known before by *May* and *Sandys*, the translators of the Pharsalia and the Metamorphoses.

In

In the Davideis are some hemistichs, or verses left imperfect by the a in imitation of Virgil, whom he supposes not to have intended to cor them: that this opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, b this truncation is imitated by no subsequent Roman poet; because Virgil self filled up one broken line in the heat of recitation; because in on sense is now unfinished; and because all that can be done by a broken a line intersected by a *cæsura* and a full stop will equally effect.

Of triplets in his Davideis he makes no use, and perhaps did not think them allowable; but he appears afterwards to have changed his for in the verses on the government of Cromwell he inserts them liberall great happiness.

After so much criticism on his Poems, the Essays which accompany must not be forgotten. What is said by Sprat of his conversation, tl man could draw from it any suspicion of his excellence in poetry, m applied to these compositions. No author ever kept his verse and his pr a greater distance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his sty a smooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due mendation. Nothing is far-sought, or hard-laboured; but all is easy wi feebleness, and familiar without grossness.

It has been observed by Felton, in his Essay on the Classicks, that C was beloved by every Muse that he courted; and that he has rivalle Ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It may be affirmed, without any encomiastic fervour, that he brought poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embel with all the ornaments which books could supply; that he was the firs imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the of the less, that he was equally qualified for sprightly sallies, and for lofty fl that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and, inst following his author at a distance, walked by his side; and, that, if h versification yet improvable, he left likewise from time to time such spec of excellence as enabled succeeding poets to improve it.

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# DENHAM.

OF Sir JOHN DENHAM very little is known but what is related o by Wood, or by himself.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only son of Sir John Denham, of Horsely in Essex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and of Ele daughter of Sir Garret Moore baron of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of th chequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and edu him in London.

In 1631 he was sent to Oxford, where he was considered "as a dreaming "young man, given more to dice and cards than study;" and therefore gave no prognosticks of his future eminence; nor was suspected to conceal, under sluggishness and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he prosecuted the common law with sufficient appearance of application; yet did not lose his propensity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gamesters.

Being severely reproved for this folly, he professed, and perhaps believed, himself reclaimed; and, to testify the sincerity of his repentance, wrote and published "An Essay upon Gaming."

He seems to have divided his ſtudies between law and poetry; for, in 1636, he translated the second book of the Æneid.

Two years after, his father died; and then, notwithstanding his resolutions and professions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and lost several thousand pounds that had been left him.

In 1642, he publiſhe "The Sophy." This seems to have given him his firſt hold of the public attention; for Waller remarked, "that he broke out, "like the Irish rebellion, threescore thousand strong when nobody was aware, "or in the least suspected it:" an observation which could have had no propriety, had his poetical abilities been known before.

He was after that pricked for sheriff of Surrey, and made governor of Farnham Castle for the king; but he soon resigned that charge, and retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he published "Cooper's Hill."

This poem had such reputation as to excite the common artifice by which envy degrades excellence. A report was spread, that the performance was not his own, but that he had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds. The same attempt was made to rob Addiſon of his Cato, and Pope of his Essay on Criticism.

In 1647, the distresses of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was entrusted by the queen with a message to the king; and, by whatever means, so far softened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that by his intercession admission was procured. Of the king's condescension he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the king's correspondence; and, as he says, discharged this office with great safety to the royalists: and being accidentally discovered by the adverse party's knowledge of Mr. Cowley's hand, he escaped happily both for himself and his friends.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648, he conveyed James the duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the Queen and prince of Wales. This year he published his translation of "Cato Major."

He now resided in France, as one of the followers of the exiled king; and, to divert the melancholy of their condition, was sometimes enjoined by his master to write occasional verses; one of which amusements was probably his

ode or song upon the Embassy to Poland, by which he and lord Crofts procured a contribution of ten thousand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and of great extent, where every man resided on his own estate, contributed very much to the accommodation of life, by bringing to every man's house those little necessaries which it was very inconvenient to want, and very troublesome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were no small, the success of this negociation gives sufficient evidence.

About this time, what estate the war and the gamesters had left him was sold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England he was entertained by the earl of Pembroke.

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Restoration he obtained that which many missed, the reward of his loyalty; being made surveyor of the king's buildings, and dignified with the order of the Bath. He seems now to have learned some attention to money; for Wood says, that he got by this place seven thousand pounds.

After the Restoration he wrote the poem on Prudence and Justice, and perhaps some of his other pieces: and as he appears, whenever any serious question comes before him, to have been a man of piety, he consecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made a metrical version of the psalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but in sacred poetry who has succeeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his master and esteem of the public would now make him happy. But human felicity is short and uncertain; a second marriage brought upon him so much disquiet, as for a time disordered his understanding; and Butler lampooned him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made public, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuse.

His frensy lasted not long *; and he seems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley, whom he was not long to survive; for on the 19th of March, 1668, he was buried by his side.

DENHAM is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry. "Denham and Waller," says Prior, "improved our versification, and Dryden "perfected it." He has given specimens of various composition, descriptive, ludicrous, didactick, and sublime.

He appears to have had, in common with almost all mankind, the ambition of being upon proper occasions *a merry fellow*, and in common with most of them to have been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from it. Nothing is less exhilarating than the ludicrousness of Denham: He does not fail for want

* In Grammont's Memoirs many circumstances are related both of his marriage and his frensy very little favourable to his character. E.

of

orts: he is familiar, he is gross; but he is never merry, unless the "Speech inst peace in the close Committee" be excepted. For grave burlesque, ver, his imitation of Davenant shews him to have been well qualified. his more elevated occasional poems there is perhaps none that does not ve commendation. In the verses to Fletcher, we have an image that has been adopted:

"But whither am I stray'd? I need not raise
"Trophies to thee from other men's dispraise;
"Nor is thy fame on lesser ruins built,
"Nor need thy juster title the foul guilt
"Of eastern kings, who, to secure their reign,
"Must have their brothers, sons, and kindred slain."

ter Denham, Orrery, in one of his prologues,

"Poets are sultans, if they had their will;
"For every author would his brother kill."

id Pope,

"Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
"Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne."

t this is not the best of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem to haw, and his elegy on Cowley.

s praise of Fanshaw's version of Guarini, contains a very sprightly and ious character of a good translator:

"That servile path thou nobly dost decline,
"Of tracing word by word, and line by line.
"Those are the labour'd birthis of slavish brains,
"Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
"Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrowness affords
"No flight for thoughts, but poorly stick at words.
"A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,
"To make translations and translators too.
"They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,
"True to his sense, but truer to his fame."

ie excellence of these lines is greater, as the truth which they contain ıot at that time generally known.

s poem on the death of Cowley was his last, and, among his shorter works, est performance: the numbers are musical, and the thoughts are just.

Cooper's Hill" is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity original author. He seems to have been, at least among us, the author pecies of composition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the amental subject is some particular landschape, to be poetically described, the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical spection or incidental meditation.

To trace a new scheme of poetry has in itself a very high claim to praise, an its praise is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and Pope *; afte whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets, that hav left scarce a corner of the island not dignified either by rhyme, or blank vers

"COOPER'S HILL," if it be maliciously inspected, will not be found with out its faults. The digressions are too long, the morality too frequent, and th sentiments sometimes such as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verses, which, since Dryden has commended them, almost ever writer for a century past has imitated, are generally known:

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
"My great example, as it is my theme!
"Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

The lines are in themselves not perfect; for most of the words, thus artfully opposed, are to be understood simply on one side of the comparison, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language which does not expres intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot b translated. But so much meaning is comprized in few words; the particulars o resemblance are so perspicaciously collected, and every mode of excellenc separated from its adjacent fault by so nice a line of limitation; the differen parts of the sentence are so accurately adjusted; and the flow of the las couplet is so smooth and sweet; that the passage, however celebrated, has no been praised above its merit. It has beauty peculiar to itself, and must b numbered among those felicities which cannot be produced at will by wit an labour, but must arise unexpectedly in some hour propitious to poetry.

He appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity c emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpretin single words. How much this servile practice obscured the clearest and de formed the most beautiful parts of the ancient authors, may be discovered by perusal of our earlier versions; some of them the works of men well qualifie not only by critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, who yet, by a mistake ambition of exactness, degraded at once their originals and themselves.

Denham saw the better way, but has not pursued it with great success. H versions of Virgil are not pleasing; but they taught Dryden to please bette His poetical imitation of Tully on "Old Age" has neither the clearness c prose nor the spritghtliness of poetry.

The "strength of Denham," which Pope so emphatically mentions, is to b found in many lines and couplets, which convey much meaning in few word and exhibit the sentiment with more weight than bulk.

* By Garth, in his "Poem on Claremont," and by Pope, in his "Windsor Forest." I

On the Thames.

" Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
" Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
" His genuine and less guilty wealth t' explore,
" Search not his bottom, but survey his shore."

On Strafford.

" His wisdom such, as once it did appear
" Three kingdoms wonder, and three kingdoms fear;
" While single he stood forth, and seemed although
" Each had an army, as an equal foe.
" Such was his force of eloquence, to make
" The hearers more concern'd than he that spake;
" Each seem'd to act that part he came to see,
" And none was more a looker-on than he;
" So did he move our passions, some were known
" To wish, for the defence, the crime their own.
" Now private pity strove with publick hate,
" Reason with rage, and eloquence with fate."

On Cowley.

" To him no author was unknown,
" Yet what he wrote was all his own,
" Horace's wit, and Virgil's state,
" He did not steal, but emulate!
" And when he would like them appear,
" Their garb, but not their cloaths, did wear.

one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of posterity arises from
improvement of our numbers, his versification ought to be considered. It
afford that pleasure which arises from the observation of a man of judg-
naturally right, forsaking bad copies by degrees, and advancing towards
ter practice, as he gains more confidence in himself.

his translation of Virgil, written when he was about twenty-one years
nay be still found the old manner of continuing the sense ungracefully
verse to verse.

" Then all those
" Who in the dark our fury did escape,
" Returning, know our borrow'd arms, and shape,
" And differing dialect: then their numbers swell
" And grow upon us; first Chorœbus fell
" Before Minerva's altar: next did bleed
" Just Ripheus, whom no Trojan did exceed
" In virtue, yet the gods his fate decreed.
" Then Hypanis and Dymas, wounded by
" Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus, thy piety,

Nor

" Nor consecrated mitre, from the same
" Ill fate could save: my country's funeral flame
" And Troy's cold ashes I attest, and call
" To witness for myself, that in their fall
" No foes, or death, nor danger I declin'd,
" Did and deserv'd no less, my fate to find."

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their sense in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much constancy pursued.

This passage exhibits one of those triplets which are not infrequent in this first essay, but which it is to be supposed his maturer judgment disapproved, since in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are such as seem found without difficulty, by following the sense; and are for the most part as exact at least as those of other poets, though now and then the reader is shifted off with what he can get.

" O how *transform'd!*
" How much unlike that Hector, who *return'd*
" Clad in Achilles' spoils!

And again:

" From thence a thousand lesser poets *sprung*,
" Like petty princes from the fall of *Rome*."

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is laid upon a word too feeble to sustain it:

" Troy confounded falls
" From all her glories: if it might have stood
" By any power, by this right hand it *shou'd*.
" —And though my outward state misfortune *hath*
" Deprest thus low, it cannot reach my faith."
" —Thus by his fraud and our own faith o'ercome,
" A feigned tear destroys us, against *whom*
" Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,
" Nor ten years conflict, nor a thousand sail."

He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verses: in one passage the word *die* rhymes three couplets in six.

Most of these petty faults are in his first productions, when he was less skilful, or at least less dexterous in the use of words; and though they had been more frequent they could only have lessened the grace, not the strength of his composition. He is one of the writers that improved our taste, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

# MILTON.

THE Life of Milton has been already written in so many forms, and with such minute enquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myself with the addition of a few notes to Mr. Fenton's elegant Abridgement, but that a new narrative was thought necessary to the uniformity of this edition.

JOHN MILTON was by birth a gentleman, descended from the proprietors of Milton near Thame in Oxfordshire, one of whom forfeited his estate in the times of York and Lancaster. Which side he took I know not; his descendant inherited no veneration for the White Rose.

His grandfather John was keeper of the forest of Shotover, a zealous papist, who disinherited his son, because he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors.

His father, John, who was the son disinherited, had recourse for his support to the profession of a scrivener. He was a man eminent for his skill in music, many of his compositions being still to be found; and his reputation in his profession was such, that he grew rich, and retired to an estate. He had probably more than common literature, as his son addresses him in one of his most elaborate Latin poems. He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caston, a Welsh family, by whom he had two sons, John the poet, and Christopher who studied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the King's party, for which he was awhile persecuted; but having, by his brother's interest, obtained permission to live in quiet, he supported himself so honourably by chamber-practice, that, soon after the accession of King James, he was knighted and made a Judge; but, his constitution being too weak for business, he retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary.

He had likewise a daughter Anne, whom he married with a considerable fortune to Edward Philips, who came from Shrewsbury, and rose in the Crown-office to be secondary: by him she had two sons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from whom is derived the only authentic account of his domestic manners.

John, the Poet, was born in his father's house, at the Spread-Eagle in Bread-street, Dec. 9, 1608, between six and seven in the morning. His father appears to have been very solicitous about his education; for he was instructed at first by private

private tuition under the care of Thomas Young, who was afterwards chaplain to the English merchants at Hamburgh, and of whom we have reason to think well, since his scholar considered him as worthy of an epistolary Elegy.

He was then sent to St. Paul's School, under the care of Mr. Gill; and removed, in the beginning of his sixteenth year, to Christ's College in Cambridge, where he entered a sizar*, Feb. 12, 1624.

He was at this time eminently skilled in the Latin tongue; and he himself, by annexing the dates to his first compositions, a boast of which *Politian* had given him an example, seems to commend the earliness of his own proficiency to the notice of posterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an estimate: many have excelled Milton in their first essays, who never rose to works like *Paradise Lost*.

At fifteen, a date which he uses till he is sixteen, he translated or versified two Psalms, 114 and 136, which he thought worthy of the public eye; but they raise no great expectations; they would in any numerous school have obtained praise, but not excited wonder.

Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice discernment. I once heard Mr. Hampton, the translator of Polybius, remark what I think is true, that Milton was the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they may have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verses than they provoke derision. If we produced any thing worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps *Alabaster's Roxana* †.

Of these exercises which the rules of the University required, some were published by him in his maturer years. They had been undoubtedly applauded; for they were such as few can perform: yet there is reason to suspect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondness. That he obtained no fellowship is certain; but the unkindness with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am ashamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the last students in either university that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction.

It was, in the violence of controversial hostility, objected to him, that he was expelled; this he steadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it seems plain from his own verses to *Diodati*, that he had incurred *Rustication*; a temporary dismission into the country, with perhaps the loss of a term.

* In this assertion Dr. Johnson was mistaken. Milton was admitted a pensioner, and not a sizar, as will appear by the following extract from the College Register. "Johannes Milton "Londinensis, filius Johannis, institutus fuit in literarum Elementis sub Mag'ro Gill "Gymnasii Paulini præfecto, admissus est *Pensionarius Minor* Feb. 12°, 1624, sub M'ro "Chappell, solvitq. pro Ingr. £.0 10*s*. 0*d*. E.

† Published 1632. E.

Me

Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thamesis alluit undâ,
Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,
Nec dudum vetiti me *laris* angit amor.—
Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.
Si sit hoc *exilium* patrias adiisse penates,
Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,
Non ego vel *profugi* nomen sortemve recuso,
Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor.

I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindness and reverence can give to the term, *vetiti laris*, "a habitation from which he is excluded;" or how *exile* can be otherwise interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else, which a temper like his cannot undergo.* What was more than threat was probably punishment. This poem, which mentions his *exile*, proves likewise that it was not perpetual; for it concludes with a resolution of returning some time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured from the willingness with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cause was such as gave him no shame.

He took both the usual degrees; that of Batchelor in 1628, and that of Master in 1632; but he left the university with no kindness for its institution, alienated either by the injudicious severity of his governors, or his own captious perverseness. The cause cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His scheme of education inscribed to *Hartlib.* supersedes all academical instruction, being intended to comprise the whole time which men usually spend in literature, from their entrance upon grammar, *till they proceed, as it is called, masters of arts.* And in his Discourse *on the likeliest way to remove Hirelings out of the Church*, he ingeniously proposes, that *the profits of the lands forfeited by the act for superstitious uses, should be applied to such academies all over the land where languages and arts may be taught together; so that youth may be at once brought up, to a competency of learning and an honest trade, by which means such of them as had the gift, being enabled to support themselves (without tithes) by the latter, may, by the help of the former, become worthy preachers.*

One of his objections to academical education, as it was then conducted, is, that men designed for orders in the Church were permitted to act plays, *writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antick and dishonest gestures of Trincalos*, buffoons and bauds, prostituting the shame of that ministry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and court ladies, their grooms and mademoiselles.*

* By the mention of this name he evidently refers to Albumazar, acted at Cambridge in 1614. Ignoramus and other plays were performed at the same time. The practice was then very frequent. The last dramatick performance at either university was *The Grateful Fair*, written by Christopher Smart, and represented at Pembroke College, Cambridge, about 1747. E.

This is sufficiently peevish in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from the college, relates with great luxuriance, the compensation which the pleasures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academicks.

He went to the university with a design of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman must "subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a con-"science that could not retch, he must straight perjure himself. He thought "it better to prefer a blameless silence before the office of speaking, bought "and begun with servitude and forswearing."

These expressions are, I find, applied to the subscription of the Articles; but it seems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any of the Articles which seem to thwart his opinions; but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raised his indignation.

His unwillingness to engage in the ministry, perhaps not yet advanced to a settled resolution of declining it, appears in a letter to one of his friends, who had reproved his suspended and dilatory life, which he seems to have imputed to an insatiable curiosity and fantastic luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool and plausible answer, in which he endeavours to persuade him that the delay proceeds not from the delights of desultory study, but from the desire of obtaining more fitness for his task; and that he goes on, *not taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit.*

When he left the university, he returned to his father, then residing at Horton in Buckinghamshire, with whom he lived five years; in which time he is said to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this universality is to be understood, who shall inform us?

It might be supposed, that he who read so much should have done nothing else; but Milton found time to write the Masque of *Comus*, which was presented at Ludlow, then the residence of the Lord President of Wales, in 163; and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's sons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's *Circe* *; but we never can refuse to any modern the liberty of borrowing from Homer:

* It has nevertheless its foundation in reality. The earl of Bridgewater being president of Wales in the year 1634, had his residence at Ludlow-castle in Shropshire, at which time lord Brackly and Mr. Egerton his sons, and lady Alice Egerton his daughter, passing through a place called the Hay-wood Forest, or Haywood in Herefordshire, were benighted, and the lady for a short time lost: this accident being related to their father upon their arrival at his castle, Milton, at the request of his friend Henry Lawes, who taught music in the family, wrote this masque. Lawes set it to music, and it was acted on Michaelmas night; the two brothers, the young lady, and Lawes himself, bearing each a part in the representation.

The lady Alice Egerton became afterwards the wife of the earl of Carbury, who at his seat called Golden-grove, in Caermarthenshire, harboured Dr. Jeremy Taylor in the time of the Usurpation. Among the doctor's sermons is one on her death, in which her character is finely pourtrayed. Her sister, lady Mary, was given in marriage to lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Notwithstanding

——— a quo ceu fonte perenni
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

ext production was *Lycidas*, an elegy, written in 1637, on the death of g, the son of Sir John King, secretary for Ireland in the time of Elizaames and Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many his joined to do honour to his memory. Milton's acquaintance with the writers may be discovered by a mixture of longer and shorter verses, ac- to the rules of Tuscan poetry, and his malignity to the Church, by es which are interpreted as threatening its extermination.

supposed about this time to have written his *Arcades*; for while he lived n he used sometimes to steal from his studies a few days, which he spent field, the house of the countess dowager of Derby, where the *Arcades* rt of a dramatick entertainment.

gan now to grow weary of the country; and had some purpose of taking s in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother set him at liberty l, for which he obtained his father's consent, and Sir Henry Wotton's s, with the celebrated precept of prudence; *i pensieri stretti, ed il viso* 'thoughts close, and looks loose."

38 he left England, and went first to Paris; where, by the favour of *ndamore*, he had the opportunity of visiting *Grotius*, then residing at the court as ambassador from Christina of Sweden. From Paris he hasted y, of which he had with particular diligence studied the language and li- : and though he seems to have intended a very quick perambulation of ıtry, staid two months at Florence; where he found his way into the es, and produced his compositions with such applause as appear to have im in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope, that, "by labour ıtense study, which," says he, "I take to be my portion in this life, l with a strong propensity of nature," he might "leave something so n to after times, as they should not willingly let it die."

ears, in all his writings, that he had the usual concomitant of great abi- ofty and steady confidence in himself, perhaps not without some con- fathers; for scarcely any man ever wrote so much, and praised so few. raise he was very frugal; as he set its value high, and considered his of a name as a security against the waste of time, and a certain pre- n from oblivion.

reuce he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted distinction. ati presented him with an encomiastic inscription, in the tumid lapidary nd Francini wrote him an ode, of which the first stanza is only empty

standing Dr. Johnson's assertion, that the fiction is derived from Homer's Circe, it jectured that it was rather taken from the Comus of Erycius Puteanus, in which, under of a dream, the characters of Comus and his attendants are delineated, and the delights sts expressed and reprobated. This little tract was published at Louvain in 1611, and at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which Milton's Comus was written. H.

evidently was indebted to the *Old Wives Tale* of George Peele for the plan of Comus. E.

noise; the rest are perhaps too diffuse on common topicks; but the last is natural and beautiful.

From Florence he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome, where he was again received with kindness by the Learned and the Great. Holstenius, the keeper of the Vatican library, who had resided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini: and he, at a musical entertainment, waited for him at the door, and led him by the hand into the assembly. Here Selvaggi praised him in a distich, and Salsilli in a tetrastich: neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this literary commerce; for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salsilli, though not secure against a stern grammarian, turn the balance indisputably in Milton's favour.

Of these Italian testimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publish them before his poems; though he says, he cannot be suspected but to have known that they were said *non tam de se, quam supra se.*

At Rome, as at Florence, he staid only two months; a time indeed sufficient, if he desired only to ramble with an explainer of its an antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures; but certainly too short for the contemplation of learning, policy, or manners.

From Rome he passed on to Naples, in company of a hermit; a companion from whom little could be expected, yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manso marquis of Villa, who had before been the patron of Taſſo. Manso was enough delighted with his accomplishments to honour him with a sorry distich, in which he commends him for every thing but his religion; and Milton, in return, addressed him in a Latin poem, which must have raised an high opinion of English elegance and literature.

His purpose was now to have visited Sicily and Greece; but, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to hasten home, rather than pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. He therefore came back to Rome, though the merchants informed him of plots laid against him by the Jesuits, for the liberty of his conversations on religion. He had sense enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as before, neither obtruding nor shunning controversy. He had perhaps given some offence by visiting Galileo, then a prisoner in the inquisition for philosophical heresy; and at Naples he was told by Manso, that, by his declarations on religious questions, he had excluded himself from some distinctions which he should otherwise have paid him. But such conduct, though it did not please, was yet sufficiently safe; and Milton staid two months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without molestation.

From Florence he visited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice; and having sent away a collection of music and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he probably considered as the metropolis of orthodoxy.

Here he reposed, as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati and Frederick Spanheim, two learned professors of Divinity. From Geneva he passed through France; and came home, after an absence of a year and three months.

At

At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati; a man whom it is reasonable to suppose of great merit, since he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem, intituled, *Epitaphium Damonis*, written with the common but childish imitation of pastoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the house of one Russel, a taylor, in St. Bride's Church yard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips, his sister's sons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a house and garden in Aldersgate-street*, which was not then so much out of the world as it is now; and chose his dwelling at the upper end of a passage, that he might avoid the noise of the street. Here he received more boys to be boarded and instructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performances, on the man who hastens home, because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a school-master; but, since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out, that he taught for nothing, and another, that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not ample; and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment.

It is told, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable list is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Aldersgate-street, by youth between ten and fifteen or sixteen years of age. Those who tell or receive these stories should consider that nobody can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horseman must be limited by the power of his horse. Every man, that has ever undertaken to instruct others, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension.

The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was to teach something more solid than the common literature of Schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects; such as the Georgick, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was that

* This is inaccurately expressed: Philips, and Dr. Newton after him, say a garden house, i. e. a house situate in a garden, and of which there were especially in the north suburbs of London very many, if not few else. The term is technical, and frequently occurs in the Athen. and Fast. Oxon. The meaning thereof may be collected from the article Thomas Farnabe, the famous school-master, of whom the author says, that he taught in Goldsmith's Rents in Cripplegate parish, behind Redcross-street, where were large gardens and handsome houses. Milton's house in Jewin-street was also a garden-house, as were indeed most of his dwellings after his settlement in London. H.

wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education his imaginary College.

But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences whi that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent busine of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, wheth we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and mor knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the histo of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, a prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prejudice and Justice are virtu and excellences of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, b we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual natu is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Ph siological learning is of such rare emergence, that one man may know anoth half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostaticks or astron my; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axiom of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversa tion; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians

Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantick or paradoxical; for I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour t turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but th innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. The seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or th motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had t learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν ἀγαθοῖσι τέτυκται.

Of institutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent fo knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe, is a small History of Poetry written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which perhaps none of my reader has ever heard *.

That in his school, as in every thing else which he undertook, he laboure with great diligence, there is no reason for doubting. One part of his metho deserves general imitation. He was careful to instruct his scholars in religion Every Sunday was spent upon theology: of which he dictated a short system gathered from the writers that were then fashionable in Dutch universities.

He set his pupils an example of hard study and spare diet; only now and the he allowed himself to pass a day of festivity and indulgence with some ga gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

H

* "We may be sure at least, that Dr. Johnson had never seen the book he speaks of; fo "it is entirely composed in English, though its title begins with two Latin words, 'Theatrum "Poetarum; or A complete Collection of the Poets, &c.' a circumstance that probably misle "the biographer of Milton." *European Magazine, June*, 1787. p. 388. E.

He now began to engage in the controversies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of contention. In 1641 he published a treatise of *Reformation*, in two books, against the established Church; being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he says, *inferior to the Prelates in learning*.

Hall bishop of Norwich, had published an *Humble Remonstrance*, in defence of Episcopacy; to which, in 1641, six ministers*, of whose names the first letters made the celebrated word *Smectymnuus*, gave their answer. Of this Answer a Confutation was attempted by the learned *Usher*; and to the Confutation Milton published a Reply, intituled, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apostolical Times, by virtue of those testimonies which are alledged to that purpose in some late treatises, one whereof goes under the name of James Lord Bishop of Armagh.*

I have transcribed this title to shew, by his contemptuous mention of Usher, that he had now adopted the puritanical savageness of manners. His next work was, *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton*, 1642. In this book he discovers, not with ostentatious exultation, but with calm confidence, his high opinion of his own powers; and promises to undertake something, he yet knows not what, that may be of use and honour to his country. "This," says he, "is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to "that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and "sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and "purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added, industrious and "select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous "arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compast, I refuse not to "sustain this expectation." From a promise like this, at once fervid, pious and rational, might be expected the *Paradise Lost*.

He published the same year two more pamphlets, upon the same question. To one of his antagonists, who affirms that he was *vomited out of the university*, he answers, in general terms; "The Fellows of the College wherein I spent "some years, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, "signified many times how much better it would content that I should stay. "—As for the common approbation or dislike of that place, as now it is, "that I should esteem or disesteem myself the more for that, too simple is "the answerer, if he think to obtain one with me. Of small practice were the "physician who could not judge, by what she and her sister have of long "time vomited, that the worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but "the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasy; she vomits now out of "sickness; but before it will be well with her, she must vomit with strong "physick. The university, in the time of her better health, and my younger "judgment, I never greatly admired, but now much less."

This is surely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to describe the course of his conduct, and the train of his thoughts; and,

* Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spinstow.

and, because he has been suspected of incontinence, gives an account of his c
" purity: That if I be justly charged," says he, " with this crime, it may cc
" upon me with tenfold shame."

The style of his piece is rough, and such perhaps was that of his antagoi This roughness he justifies, by great examples in a long digression. Sometime tries to be humorous: " Lest I should take him for some chaplain in hand, sc " squire of the body to his prelate, one who serves not at the altar only but at " Court-cupboard, he will bestow on us a pretty model of himself; and sets " out half a dozen ptisical mottoes, wherever he had them, hopping short in " measure of convulsion fits; in which labour the agony of his wit having sca " narrowly, instead of well sized periods, he greets us with a quantity of thui " ring posies —And thus ends this section, or rather dissection of himse Such is the controversial merriment of Milton; his gloomy seriousness is more offensive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown*

His father, after Reading was taken by *Essex*, came to reside in his house; i his school increased. At Whitsuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mi the daughter of Mr. Powel, a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. He brou her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. T lady, however, seems not much to have delighted in the pleasures of spare c and hard study; for, as Philips relates, " having for a month led a philosop " life, after having been used at home to a great house, and much compi " and joviality, her friends, possibly by her own desire, made earnest suit " have her company the remaining part of the summer; which was grant " upon a promise of her return at Michaelmas."

Milton was too busy to much miss his wife: he pursued his studies; and n and then visited the Lady Margaret Leith, whom he has mentioned in one his sonnets. At last Michaelmas arrived; but the Lady had no inclinatior return to the sullen gloom of her husband's habitation, and therefore very v lingly forgot her promise. He sent her a letter, but had no answer; he sent m with the same success It could be alledged that letters miscarry; he therefore patched a messenger, being by this time too angry to go himself. His messen was sent back with some contempt. The family of the Lady were Cavalie

In a man whose opinion of his own merit was like Milton's, less provocat than this might have raised violent resentment. Milton soon determined to re diate her for disobedience; and, being one of those who could easily find ar ments to justify inclination, published (in 1644) *The Doctrine and Discipli Divorce*; which was followed by *The Judgement of Martin Bucer, concern Divorce*; and the next year, his Tetrachordon, *Expositions upon the four places of Scripture which treat of Marriage.*

This innovation was opposed, as might be expected, by the clergy, who, t holding their famous assembly at Westminster, procured that the author she be calledbefore the Lords; " but that House," says Wood, " whether appr " ing the doctrine, or not favouring his accusers, did soon dismiss him."

There seems not to have been much written against him, nor any thing by writer of eminence. The antagonist that appeared is styled by him, *a Scr*

*A*

*Man turned Solicitor.* *Howel* in his letters mentions the new doctrine with contempt; and it was, I suppose, thought more worthy of derision than of confutation. He complains of this neglect in two sonnets, of which the first is contemptible, and the second not excellent.

From this time it is observed that he became an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favoured before. He that changes his party by his humour, is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his interest; he loves himself rather than truth.

His wife and her relations now found that Milton was not an unresisting sufferer of injuries; and perceiving that he had begun to put his doctrine in practice, by courting a young woman of great accomplishments, the daughter of one Mr. Davis, who was however not ready to comply, they resolved to endeavour reunion. He went sometimes to the house of one Blackborough his relation, in the lane of St. Martin's-le-Grand, and at one of his usual visits was surprised to see his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveness on her knees. He resisted her intreaties for a while: "but partly," says Philips, "his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than to perseverance in anger or revenge, and partly the strong intercession of friends on both sides, soon brought him to an act of oblivion, and a firm league of peace." It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own house, when they were distressed, with other Royalists.

He published about the same time his *Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr.* John Milton *for the liberty of unlicensed Printing.* The danger of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of Government which human understanding seems hitherto unable to solve. If nothing may be published but what civil authority shall have previously approved, power must always be the standard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no settlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace; and if every sceptick in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy against these evils is to punish the authors; for it is yet allowed that every society may punish, though not prevent, the publication of opinions, which that society shall think pernicious; but this punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book; and it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or domestic, poetry was never long out of his thoughts.

About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and English poems appeared, in which the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, with some others, were first published.

He had taken a larger house in Barbican for the reception of scholars; but the numerous relations of his wife, to whom he generously granted refuge for a while, occupied his rooms. In time, however, they went away; "and the house," "again," says Philips, "now looked like a house of the Muses only, though the "accession of scholars was not great. Possibly his having proceeded so far in the

"education of youth, may have been the occasion of his adversaries calling him "pedagogue and school-master; whereas it is well known that he never set "up for a public school, to teach all the young fry of a parish; but only was "willing to impart his learning and knowledge to his relations, and the sons "of gentlemen who were his intimate friends; and that neither his writings "nor his way of teaching savoured in the least of pedantry."

Thus laboriously does his nephew extenuate what cannot be denied, and what might be confessed without disgrace. Milton was not a man who could become mean by a mean employment. This, however, his warmest friends seem not to have found; they therefore shift and palliate. He did not sell literature to all comers at an open shop; he was a chamber-milliner, and measured his commodities to his friends

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this state of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raise his character again, has a mind to invest him with military splendour: "He is much mistaken," he says, "if "there was not about this time a design of making him an adjutant-general in "Sir William Waller's army. But the new modelling of the army proved "an obstruction to the design." An event cannot be set at a much greater distance than by having been only *designed, about some time*, if a man *be not much mistaken*. Milton shall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much mistaken, somebody at some time designed him for a soldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645) he removed to a smaller house in Holbourn, which opened backward into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. He is not known to have published any thing afterwards till the King's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it, and *to compose the minds of the people.*

He made some *Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels.* While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions, and the gradual prevalence of opinions, first willingly admitted, and then habitually indulged; if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and desire superinduced conviction; he yet shared only the common weakness of mankind, and might be no less sincere than his opponents. But as faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Basilike*, which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin secretary, employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from *Sidney's Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his *Iconoclastes*, with the use of this prayer, as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable or great: "Who "would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all seeing Deity—as, "immediately before his death, to pop into the hands of the grave bishop that "attended him, as a special relique of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word "for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god?"

The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the scaffold, the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch

Birch who had examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The use of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could so noisily censure it, with a little extension of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuse.

King Charles the Second, being now sheltered in Holland, employed Salmasius, professor of Polite Learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his industry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuses. Salmasius was a man of skill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and sagacity of emendatory criticism, almost exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by excessive praises, been confirmed in great confidence of himself, though he probably had not much considered the principles of society or the rights of government, undertook the employment without distrust of his own qualifications; and, as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 published *Defensio Regis*

To this Milton was required to write a sufficient answer; which he performed (1651) in such a manner, that Hobbes declared himself unable to decide whose language was best, or whose arguments were worst. In my opinion, Milton's periods are smoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himself with teazing his adversary as much as with confuting him. He makes a foolish allusion of Salmasius, whose doctrine he considers as servile and unmanly, to the stream of *Salmacis*, which whoever entered left half his virility behind him. Salmasius was a Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a scold. *Tu es Gallus*, says Milton, *& ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus*. But his supreme pleasure is to tax his adversary, so renowned for criticism, with vicious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has used *Persona*, which, according to Milton, signifies only a *Mask*, in a sense not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Person*. But as Nemesis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a solecism by an expression in itself grosly solecistical, when for one of those supposed blunders, he says, as *Ker*, and I think some one before him, has remarked, *propino te grammatistis tuis* vapulandum. From *vapulo*, which has a passive sense, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.

Milton, when he undertook this answer, was weak of body and dim of sight; but his will was forward, and what was wanting of health was supplied by zeal. He was rewarded with a thousand pounds, and his book was much read; for paradox, recommended by spirit and elegance, easily gains attention; and he who told every man that he was equal to his King, could hardly want an audience.

That the performance of Salmasius was not dispersed with equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerness, is very credible. He taught only the stale doctrine of authority, and the unpleasing duty of submission; and he had been so long not only the monarch but the tyrant of literature, that almost all mankind were delighted to find him defied and insulted by a new name, not yet considered as any one's rival. If Christina, as is said, commended the *Defence of the People*, her purpose must be to torment Salmasius, who was then at her Court; for neither her civil station nor her natural character could dispose them to favour the doctrine, who was by birth a queen, and by temper despotick.

That Salmasius was, from the appearance of Milton's book, treated with neglect, there is not much proof; but to a man so long accustomed to admiration a little praise of his antagonist would be sufficiently offensive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from which, however, he was dismissed, not with any mark of contempt, but with a train of attendance scarce less than regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imperfect, was published by his son in the year of the Restauration. In the beginning, being probably most in pain for his Latinity, he endeavours to defend his use of the word *persona*, but, if I remember right, he misses a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth satire:

—Quid agis cum dira et fœdior omni
Crimine *persona* est?

As Salmasius reproached Milton with losing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himself with the belief that he had shortened Salmasius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reason. Salmasius died at the Spa, Sept. 3, 1653; and, as controvertists are commonly said to be killed by their last dispute, Milton was flattered with the credit of destroying him.

Cromwell had now dismissed the parliament by the authority of which he had destroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himself, under the title of protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himself founded his right only in necessity; but Milton, having now tasted the honey of public employment, would not return to hunger and philosophy, but, continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more just, than that rebellion should end in slavery; that he who had justified the murder of his king, for some acts which to him seemed unlawful, should now sell his services, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

He had now been blind for some years; but his vigour of intellect was such, that he was not disabled to discharge his office of Latin secretary, or continue his controversies. His mind was too eager to be diverted, and too strong to be subdued.

About this time his first wife died in child-bed, having left him three daughters. As he probably did not much love her, he did not long continue the appearance of lamenting her; but after a short time married Catharine, the daughter of one captain Woodcock of Hackney; a woman doubtless educated in opinions like his own. She died within a year of childbirth, or some distemper that followed it; and her husband honoured her memory with a poor sonnet.

The first reply to Milton's *Defensio Populi* was published in 1651, called *Apologia pro Rege & Populo Anglicano, contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni) defensionem destructivam Regis & Populi.* Of this the author was not known; but Milton and his nephew Philips, under whose name he published an answer so much corrected by him, that it might be called his own, imputed it to Bramhal; and, knowing him no friend to regicides, thought themselves at liberty to treat him as if they had known what they only suspected.

Next

Next year appeared *Regii Sanguinis clamor ad Cœlum.* Of this the author was Peter du Moulin, who was afterwards prebendary of Canterbury; but Morus or More, a French Minister, having the care of its publication, was treated as the writer by Milton in his *Defensio Secunda*, and overwhelmed by such violence of invective, that he began to shrink under the tempest, and gave his persecutors the means of knowing the true author. Du Moulin was now in great danger; but Milton's pride operated against his malignity; and both he and his friends were more willing that Du Moulin should escape than that he should be convicted of mistake.

In this second Defence he shews that his eloquence is not merely satirical; the rudeness of his invective is equalled by the grossness of his flattery. "Desperimur, Cromuelle, tu solus superes, ad te summa nostrarum rerum rediit, "in te solo consistit, insuperabili tuæ virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel "obloquente, nisi qui æquales inæqualis ipse honores sibi quærit, aut digniori "concessos invidet, aut non intelligit nihil esse in societate hominum magis "vel Deo gratum, vel rationi consentaneum, esse in civitate nihil æquius, "utilius, quam potiri rerum dignissimum. Eum te agnoscunt omnes, Cromuelle, "ea tu civis maximus & * gloriosissimus, dux publici consilii, exercituum "fortissimorum imperator, pater patriæ gessisti. Sic tu spontanea bonorum "omnium & animitus missa voce salutaris."

Cæsar, when he assumed the perpetual dictatorship, had not more servile or more elegant flattery. A translation may shew its servility; but its elegance is less attainable. Having exposed the unskilfulness or selfishness of the former government, "We were left," says Milton, "to ourselves: the whole nation "and interest fell into your hands, and subsists only in your abilities. To your "virtue, overpowering and resistless, every man gives way, except some who, "without equal qualifications, aspire to equal honours, who envy the distinctions of merit greater than their own, or who have yet to learn, that in the "coalition of human society, nothing is more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, than that the highest mind should have the sovereign power. "Such sir, are you by general confession, the greatest and most glorious "of our countrymen, the director of our public councils, the leader of unconquered armies, the father of your country; for by that title does every good "man hail you, with sincere and voluntary praise."

Next year having defended all that wanted defence, he found leisure to defend himself. He undertook his own vindication against More, whom he declares in his title to be justly called the author of the *Regii Sanguinis clamor*. In this there is no want of vehemence or eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted wit. "Morus es? an Momus? an utrumque idem est?" He then remembers that *Morus* is Latin for a Mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation;

—Poma alba ferebat
Quæ post nigra tulit Morus.

With this piece ended his controversies: and he from this time gave himself up to his private studies and his civil employment.

* It may be doubted whether *glorios issimus* be here used with Milton's boasted purity. *Res gloriosa* is an *illustrious thing*; but *vir gloriosus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles gloriosus*. Dr. J.

As

As secretary to the Protector he is supposed to have written the Declaration of the reasons for a war with Spain. His agency was considered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully suspended, the delay was publickly imputed to Mr. Milton's indisposition; and the Swedish agent was provoked to express his wonder, that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.

Being now forty-seven years old, and seeing himself disencumbered from external interruptions, he seems to have recollected his former purposes, and to have resumed three great works which he had planned for his future employment: an epick poem, the history of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

To collect a dictionary, seems a work of all others least practicable in a state of blindness, because it depends upon perpetual and minute inspection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it, after he had lost his eyes; but having had it always before him, he continued it, says Philips, *almost to his dying-day; but the papers were so discomposed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the press.* The compilers of the Latin dictionary printed at Cambridge had the use of those collections in three folios; but what was their fate afterwards is not known *.

To compile a history from various authors, when they can only be consulted by other eyes, is not easy, nor possible, but with more skilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of consulting and comparing, that stopped Milton's narrative at the Conquest; a period at which affairs were not yet very intricate, nor authors very numerous.

For the subject of his epick poem, after much deliberation, *long choosing, and beginning late*, he fixed upon *Paradise Lost*; a design so comprehensive, that it could be justified only by success. He had once designed to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verses to Mansus, but *Arthur was reserved*, says Fenton, *to another destiny* †:

It appears, by some sketches of poetical projects left in manuscript, and to be seen in a library ‡ at Cambridge, that he had digested his thoughts on this subject into one of those wild dramas which were anciently called Mysteries; and Philips had seen what he terms part of a tragedy, beginning with the first ten lines of Satan's address to the Sun. These mysteries consist of allegorical persons; such as *Justice, Mercy, Faith.* Of the tragedy or mystery of *Paradise Lost* there are two plans:

* The Cambridge Dictionary, published in 4to 1693, is no other than a copy, with some small additions, of that of Dr. Adam Littleton in 1685, by sundry persons, of whom, though their names are concealed, there is great reason to conjecture that Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, is one; for it is expressly said by Wood, Fasti, vol. I. p. 266, that Milton's "Thesaurus" came to his hands, and it is asserted in the preface thereto, that the editor thereof had the use of three large folios in manuscript, collected and digested into alphabetical order by Mr. John Milton.

It has been remarked, that the additions, together with the preface above-mentioned, and a large part of the title of the "Cambridge Dictionary," have been incorporated and printed with the subsequent editions of "Littleton's Dictionary," till that of 1735. Vid. Biogr. Brit. 2985, in not. So that for aught that appears to the contrary, Philips was the last possessor of Milton's MS. H.

† Id est, to be the subject of an heroic poem, written by Sir Richard Blackmore. H.

‡ *Trinity College.* E.

The

e Perſons.
-
of Angels.
ly Love.
with the
Serpent.
nce.
ent,
ce
iers;

The Persons.
Moses,
Divine Justice, Wisdom, Heavenly Love.
The Evening Star,
Hesperus.
Chorus of Angels.
Lucifer.
Adam.
Eve.
Conscience.
Labour,
Sickness,
Discontent,
Ignorance,
Fear,
Death;
Faith.
Hope.
Charity.

Chorus of Angels singing a hymn of the Creation.

ACT II.

Heavenly Love.
Evening Star.
Chorus sing the marriage-song, and describe Paradise.

ACT III.

Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin.
Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.

ACT IV.

Adam, Eve, } fallen.
Conscience cites them to God's examination.
Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has lost.

ACT V.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.
———— presented by an angel with
Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, Pestilence, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death,
To whom he gives their names. Likewise Winter, Heat, Tempest, &c.
Faith, Hope, Charity, } comfort him and instruct him.
Chorus briefly concludes.

*Paradise Lost.*

The Persons.

, προλογίζει, recounting how he as-
is true body; that it corrupts not,
it is with God in the mount; declares
with Enoch and Elijah; besides the
f the place, that certain pure winds,
d clouds, preserve it from corrup-
ence exhorts to the sight of God;
y cannot see Adam in the state of
e, by reason of their sin.

} debating what should become of man, if he fall.

Such was his first design, which could have produced only an allegory, or mystery. The following sketch seems to have attained more maturity;

Adam unparadised:

angel Gabriel, either descending or entering; shewing, since this globe
ated, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven; describes Paradise,
he Chorus, shewing the reason of his coming to keep his watch in Paradise,
ucifer's rebellion, by command from God; and withal expressing his de-
ee and know more concerning this excellent new creature, man. The
abriel, as by his name signifying a prince of power, tracing Paradise with
free office, passes by the station of the Chorus, and, desired by them, re-
at he knew of man; as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage.
is Lucifer appears; after his overthrow bemoans himself, seeks revenge
: The Chorus prepare resistance at his first approach. At last, after dis-
f enmity on either side, he departs: whereat the Chorus sings of the battle
tory in heaven, against him and his accomplices: as before, after the first

act,

set, was sung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer lating and insulting in what he had done to the destruction of man. Man and Eve having by this time been seduced by the Serpent, appears confu covered with leaves. Conscience, in a shape, accuses him; Justice cites to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the mean while, the Cl entertains the stage, and is informed by some angel the manner of the Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall; Adam then and Eve return; accus another; but especially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is stubborn i offence. Justice appears, reasons with him, convinces him. The Choru monishes Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise; but before causes to pass b his eyes, in shapes, a mask of all the evils of this life and world. He is l bled, relents, despairs; at last appears Mercy, comforts him, promises Messiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity; instructs him; he rep gives God the glory, submits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concl Compare this with the former draught.

These are very imperfect rudiments of *Paradise Lost*; but it is pleasant t great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of e lence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace gradual growth and expansion, and to observe how they are sometimes sudc advanced by accidental hints, and sometimes slowly improved by st meditation.

Invention is almost the only literary labour which blindness cannot obst and therefore he naturally solaced his solitude by the indulgence of his fa and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be necessarily vious to poetical excellence; he had made himself acquainted with *seemly art affairs*; his comprehension was extended by various knowledge; and his mer stored with intellectual treasures. He was skilful in many languages, and h reading and composition attained the full mastery of his own. He would wanted little help from books, had he retained the power of perusing th

But while his greater designs were advancing, having now, like many authors, caught the love of publication, he amused himself, as he could, little productions. He sent to the press (1658) a manuscript of Raleigh, calle *Cabinet Council*; and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy, by a *T of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, and the Means of removing Hirelings out Church*.

Oliver was now dead; Richard was constrained to resign: the system temporary government, which had been held together only by force, nat fell into fragments when that force was taken away; and Milton saw self and his cause in equal danger. But he had still hope of doing some He wrote letters, which Toland has published, to such men as he th friends to the new commonwealth; and even in the year of the Restor he *bated no jot of heart or hope*, but was fantastical enough to think tha nation, agitated as it was, might be settled by a pamphlet, called *A rea easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth*; which was, however, enough sidered to be both seriously and ludicrously answered.

The obstinate enthusiasm of the commonwealthmen was very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington, with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could strike no longer, was foolish enough to publish, a few weeks before the Restoration, *Notes upon a sermon preached by one Griffiths, intituled, The Fear of God and the King.* To these notes an answer was written by L'Estrange, in a pamphlet petulantly called *No Blind Guides.*

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be restored with the irresistible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office; and proportioning his sense of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to seek some shelter, and hid himself for a time in Bartholomew-Close, by West Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence.

The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs: and promised to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except those whom the parliament should except; and the parliament doomed none to capital punishment, but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only justified what they had done.

This justification was indeed sufficiently offensive; and June 16) an order was issued to seize Milton's *Defence*, and Goodwin's *Obstructors of Justice*, another book of the same tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to prosecute the authors; but Milton was not seized, nor perhaps very diligently pursued.

Not long after (August 19) the flutter of innumerable bosoms was stilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather called an *act of oblivion* than of grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any public trust; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderness shown to Milton, the curiosity of mankind has not forborn to enquire the reason. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another instance which may confirm Dalrymple's observation, who says, "that whenever Burnet's narrations are examined, he appears to be mistaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his prosecution was ordered; it must be therefore by design that he was included in the general oblivion. He is said to have had friends in the house, such as Marvel, Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges; and undoubtedly a man like him must have had influence. A very particular story is told by Richardson in his Memoirs, which he received from Pope, as delivered by Betterton, who might have heard it from Davenant. In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made prisoner and con-

demned to die; but was spared at the request of Milton. When the tu success brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repaid the benef appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generosity and gratitu pleasing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wa I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his relation; but of his escape there is no account. Betterton's narration ca traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. W told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it seems not certain Milton's life ever was in danger. Goodwin, who had committed the same of crime, escaped with incapacitation; and as exclusion from public trus punishment which the power of government can commonly inflict witho help of a particular law, it required no great interest to exempt Milton fr censure little more than verbal. Something may be reasonably ascrib veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities, and compassio his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. H now poor and blind; and who would pursue with violence an illust enemy, depressed by fortune, and disarmed by nature *?

The publication of the act of oblivion put him in the same condition his fellow-subjects. He was, however, upon some pretence now not kn in the custody of the serjeant in December; and, when he was released, his refusal of the fees demanded, he and the serjeant were called befor House. He was now safe within the shade of oblivion, and knew himse be as much out of the power of a griping officer, as any other man. Ho question was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have conte but that he knew himself to have right on his side.

He then removed to Jewin-street, near Aldersgate-street; and being and by no means wealthy, wanted a domestic companion and attendant; therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married Elizabeth Minsh a gentleman's family in Cheshire, probably without a fortune. All his were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it gross and indelicate t second husband: upon what other principles his choice was made, cannot be known; but marriage afforded not much of his happiness. The first wif him in disgust, and was brought back only by terror; the second, indeed, s to have been more a favourite, but her life was short. The third, as P relates, oppressed his children in his life time, and cheated them at his de

Soon after his marriage, according to an obscure story, he was offered the tinuance of his employment; and being pressed by his wife to accept it, ans ed, "You, like other women, want to ride in your coach; my wish is t "and die an honest man." If he considered the Latin secretary as exer any of the powers of government, he that had shared authority, either

* A different account of the means by which Milton secured himself is given by an hi lately brought to light. "Milton, Latin secretary to Cromwell, distinguished by his wr "in favour of the rights and liberties of the people, pretended to be dead, and had a "funeral procession. The king applauded his policy in escaping the punishment of death "seasonable shew of dying." *Cunningham's History of Great Britain*, Vol. I. p. 14.

the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly of his honesty; and if he thought the office purely ministerial, he certainly might have honestly retained it under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition; large offers and sturdy rejections are among the common topicks of falsehood.

He had so much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to disturb the new settlement with any of his political or ecclesiastical opinions, and from this time devoted himself to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning in all its parts, he gave a proof by publishing, the next year (1661), *Accidence commenced Grammar*; a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the supreme powers of his country, and was then writing *Paradise Lost*, could descend from his elevation to rescue children from the perplexity of grammatical confusion, and the trouble of lessons unnecessarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the quaker, being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him, for the advantage of his conversation, attended him every afternoon, except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib, had declared, that *to read Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood should learn and practise the Italian pronunciation, which, he said, was necessary, if he would talk with foreigners. This seems to have been a task troublesome without use. There is little reason for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general: and to teach it to an Englishman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he speaks Latin, may so soon learn the sounds which every native gives it, that he need make no provision before his journey; and if strangers visit us, it is their business to practise such conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himself by his attendance, for he relates, that Milton having a curious ear, knew by his voice when he read what he did not understand, and would stop him, and *open the most difficult passages*.

In a short time he took a house in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the register of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than any other.

He was now busied by *Paradise Lost*. Whence he drew the original design has been variously conjectured by men who cannot bear to think themselves ignorant of that which, at last, neither diligence nor sagacity can discover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthorised story of a farce seen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be the Fiddlestick of the Fiddle of Heaven.* It has been already shewn, that the first conception was a tragedy or mystery, not of a narrative, but a dramatick work, which he is supposed to have begun to reduce to its present form about the time (1655) when he finished his dispute with the defenders of the king.

He long had promised to adorn his native country by some great performance, while he had yet perhaps no settled design, and was stimulated only by such expectations as naturally arose from the survey of his attainments

and

who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporarie with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity. H might still be a giant among the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blinc

Of his artifices of study, or particular hours of composition, we have littl account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardson who seems to hav been very diligent in his enquiries, but discovers always a wish to find Milto discriminated from other men, relates, that "he would sometimes lie awak "whole nights, but not a verse could he make; and on a sudden his poetica "faculty would rush upon him with an *impetus* or *æstrum*, and his daughter wa "immediately called to secure what came. At other times he would dictat "perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

These bursts of light, and involutions of darkness, these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention, having some appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet something of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardson's relation, casually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to secure what came*, may be questioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is universally confessed, to have employed any casual visitor in disburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The story of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtless true of every fertile and copious mind, seems to have been gratuitously transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he composed much of his poem in the night and morning, I suppose before his mind was disturbed with common business; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verse*. Versification, free, like his, from the distresses of rhyme, must by a work so long be made prompt and habitual; and when his thoughts were once adjusted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his works were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book shews that he had lost his sight; and the Introduction to the seventh, that the return of the King had clouded him with discountenance; and that he was offended by the licentious festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his disloyalty, had nothing required from him, but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection; but this, which, when he skulked from the approach of his King, was perhaps more than he hoped, seems not to have satisfied him; for no sooner is he safe, than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compass'd round*. This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion: but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was

fallen

ation, molestation, or insult. Such is the reverence paid to great
s, however misused: they who contemplate in Milton the scholar and
t, were contented to forget the reviler of his king.

ien the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont
cks; where Elwood, who had taken the house for him, first saw a com-
:opy of *Paradise Lost*, and, having perused it, said to him, "Thou hast said
eat deal upon *Paradise Lost*; what hast thou to say upon *Paradise found?*"
xt year, when the danger of infection had ceased, he returned to Bunhill-
and designed the publication of his poem. A license was necessary, and
ild expect no great kindness from a chaplain of the archbishop of Canter-
He seems, however, to have been treated with tenderness; for, though ob-
is were made to particular passages, and among them to the simile of the
:lipsed in the first book, yet the license was granted; and he sold his copy,
27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons, for an immediate payment of five pounds,
i stipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred should be
f the first edition: and again, five pounds after the sale of the same num-
the second edition: and another five pounds after the same sale of the
None of the three editions were to extend beyond fifteen hundred copies.
e first edition was ten books, in a small quarto. The titles were varied
year to year; and an advertisement and the arguments of the books were
:d in some copies, and inserted in others.

e sale gave him in two years a right to his second payment, for which
ceipt was signed April 26, 1669. The second edition was not given till
; it was printed in small octavo; and the number of books was in-
d to twelve, by a division of the seventh and twelfth; and some other
improvements were made. The third edition was published in 1678;
ie widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, sold all her claims to

That in the reigns of Charles and James the *Paradise Lost* received no p lic acclamations is readily confessed. Wit and literature were on the side of Court: and who that solicited favour or fashion would venture to praise the fender of the regicides? All that he himself could think his due from *evil ton in evil days* was that reverential silence which was generously preserved. But it c not be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admi

The sale, if it be considered, will justify the public. Those who have no po to judge of past times but by their own, should always doubt their conclusi The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is at present To read not then a general amusement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thou themselves disgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aspired to lit ture, nor was every house supplied with a closet of knowledge. Those, inde who professed learning, were not less learned than at any other time; bu that middle race of students who read for pleasure or accomplishment, a who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was t comparatively small. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be sufficient remark, that the nation had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is for one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakspeare, which proba did not together make one thousand copies.

The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so mu recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all and disgusting to ma was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did n immediately increase; for many more readers than were supplied at first t nation did not afford. Only three thousand were sold in eleven years; fo forced its way without assistance: its admirers did not dare to publish th opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by adverti ments were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of n books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades t nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy still advanced, till the Revoluti put an end to the secrecy of love, and *Paradise Lost* broke into open vi with sufficient security of kind reception.

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surve the silent progress of his work, and marked its reputation stealing its way i kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conce him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, t vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his studies, and supplied the want of si by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account:

Mr. Philips tells us, " that though our author had daily about him one " other to read, some person of man's estate, who, of their own accord, gree " catched at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well n " the benefit of what they read to him, as oblige him by the benefit of th " reading; and others of younger years were sent by their parents to the sa

er

"end; yet excusing only the eldest daughter by reason of her bodily in-
"firmity, and difficult utterance of speech, (which, to say truth, I doubt was
"the principal cause of excusing her,) the other two were condemned to the
"performance of reading, and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of
"whatever book he should, at one time or other, think fit to peruse, viz. the
"Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish,
"and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read, without under-
"standing one word, must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance.
"Yet it was endured by both for a long time, though the irksomeness of this
"employment could not be always concealed, but broke out more and more
"into expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all, even the eldest
"also, sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, that
"are proper for women to learn; particularly embroideries in gold and silver."

In this scene of misery which this mode of intellectual labour sets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented. A language not understood can never be so read as to give pleasure, and very seldom so as to convey meaning. If few men would have had resolution to write books with such embarrassments, few likewise would have wanted ability to find some better expedient.

Three years after his *Paradise Lost* (1667), he published his *History of England*, comprising the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invasion. Why he should have given the first part, which he seems not to believe, and which is universally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The style is harsh; but it has something of rough vigour, which perhaps may often strike, though it cannot please.

On this history the licenser again fixed his claws, and before he could transmit it to the press tore out several parts. Some censures of the Saxon monks were taken away, lest they should be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament, and Assembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the earl of Anglesea, and which being afterwards published, has been since inserted in its proper place.

The same year were printed *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never designed by the author for the stage. As these poems were published by another bookseller, it has been asked, whether Simmons was discouraged from receiving them by the slow sale of the former. Why a writer changed his bookseller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to discover. Certainly, he who in two years sells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reason to repent his purchase.

When Milton shewed *Paradise Regained* to Elwood, "This," said he, is "owing to you; for you put it in my head by the question you put to me at "Chalfont, which otherwise I had not thought of."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear *Paradise Lost* preferred to *Paradise Regained*. Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgment of his own works. On that which has cost him

much labour he sets a high value, because he is unwilling to think that he been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilsome efforts is c sidered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; the last work, whatever it be, has necessarily most of the grace of novel Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himself.

To that multiplicity of attainments and extent of comprehension, that title this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dign which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, controvertist, the politician, having already descended to accommodate ch dren with a book of rudiments, now in the last years of his life, compose book of Logick, for the initiation of students in philosophy; and publis (1672) *Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami Methodum concinnata*; that "A new Scheme of Logick, according to the Method of Ramus." I kn not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility agai the Universities; for Ramus was one of the first oppugners of the old phi sophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools.

His polemical disposition again revived. He had now been safe so long, t he forgot his fears, and published a *Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, T ration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.*

But this little tract is modestly written, with respectful mention of t Church of England, and an appeal to the thirty-nine articles. His principle toleration is, agreement in the sufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends to all who, whatever their opinions are, profess to derive them from the sac books. The papists appeal to other testimonies, and are therefore in opinion not to be permitted the liberty of either public or private worshi for though they plead conscience, *we have no warrant*, he says, *to regard science, which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Those who are not convinced by his reasons, may be perhaps delighted wi his wit. The term *Roman catholick* is, he says, *one of the Pope's bulls; it is pa cular universal*, or *catholick schismatick.*

He has, however, something better. As the best preservative against Pope he recommends the diligent perusal of the Scriptures; a duty, from which warns the busy part of mankind not to think themselves excused.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems, with some additions.

In the last year of his life he sent to the press, seeming to take delight in pu lication, a collection of Familiar Epistles in Latin; to which, being too f to make a volume, he added some academical exercises, which perhaps perused with pleasure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth; b for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he h been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He di by a quiet and silent expiration, about the tenth of November 1674, at h house in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father in the chancel of St. Gil at Cripplegate. His funeral was very splendidly and numerously attended

Upo

his grave there is supposed to have been no memorial; but in our
nonument has been erected in Westminster-Abbey *To the Author of*
*Lost*, by Mr. Benson, who has in the inscription bestowed more words
nself than upon Milton.

i the inscription for the monument of Philips, in which he was said to
*iltono secundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Westminster, he
o admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too detestable to be
the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury, who succeeded
ng author of the inscription, permitted its reception. "And such has
he change of public opinion," said Dr. Gregory, "from whom I heard
ccount, that I have seen erected in the church a statue of that man,
name I once knew considered as a pollution of its walls."

n has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, so
e been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light
parted at the foretop, and hung down upon his shoulders, according to
ire which he has given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroick
but rather below the middle size, according to Mr. Richardson, who men-
n as having narrowly escaped from being *short and thick*. He was vigorous
ve, and delighted in the exercise of the sword, in which he is related to
en eminently skilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the
ord, of which he recommends the use in his book on Education.

yes are said never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous
they must have been once quick.

omestick habits, so far as they are known, were those of a severe stu-
le drank little strong drink of any kind, and fed without excess in quan-
d in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he studied
ight; but afterwards changed his hours, and rested in bed from nine to
the summer, and five in the winter. The course of his day was best
after he was blind. When he first rose, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew
nd then studied till twelve; then took some exercise for an hour; then
hen played on the organ, and sung, or heard another sing; then studied
then entertained his visitors till eight; then supped, and, after a pipe
cco and a glass of water, went to bed.

his life described; but this even tenour appears attainable only in
s. He that lives in the world will sometimes have the succession of his
broken and confused. Visiters, of whom Milton is represented to have
at numbers, will come and stay unseasonably; business, of which every
s some, must be done when others will do it.

n he did not care to rise early, he had something read to him by hs
; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He composed
n the morning, and dictated in the day, sitting obliquely in an elbow-
rith his leg thrown over the arm.

me appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent
onal estate to the parliament; but when, after the contest was decided,
ited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but *sharp rebuke*; and,

having tired both himself and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless indignation, till he shewed how able he was to do greater service. He was then made Latin secretary, with two hundred pounds a year; and had a thousand pounds for his *Defence of the People*. His widow, who, after his death, retired to Namptwich in Cheshire, and died about 1729, is said to have reported that he lost two thousand pounds by entrusting it to a scrivener; and that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he had grasped an estate of about sixty pounds a year belonging to Westminster-Abbey, which, like other sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return. Two thousand pounds, which he had placed in the Excise-office, were also lost. There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently supplied. He sold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.

His literature was unquestionably great. He read all the languages which are considered either as learned or polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and criticks; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's Metamorphoses and Euripides. His Euripides is, by Mr. Cradock's kindness, now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the English poets he set most value upon Spenser, Shakspeare, and Cowley. Spenser was apparently his favourite: Shakspeare he may easily be supposed to like, with every skilful reader; but I should not have expected that Cowley, whose ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who sometimes visited him, was, that he was a good rhymist, but no poet.

His theological opinions are said to have been first Calvinistical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Presbyterians, to have tended towards Arminianism. In the mixed questions of theology and government, he never thinks he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy; but what Baudius says of Erasmus seems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod sequeretur*. He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestant: we know rather what he was not than what he was. He was not of the church of Rome; he was not of the church of England.

To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed

firmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary, or with his household; omitting public prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omission the reason has been sought, upon a supposition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly was not thought superfluous by him, who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in that state of innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were those of an acrimonious and surly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reason than that *a popular government was the most frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth* It is surely very shallow policy, that supposes money to be the chief good; and even this, without considering that the support and expence of a Court is, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffick, for which money is circulated, without any national impoverishment.

Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded on an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected, that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been observed, that they who most loudly clamour for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domestic relations, is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women; and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family some account may be expected. His sister, first married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married Mr. Agar, a friend of her first husband, who succeeded him in the Crown-office. She had by her first husband Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her second, two daughters.

His brother, Sir Christopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catherine*; and a son Thomas, who succeeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Grosvenor-street.

* Both these persons were living at Holloway, about the year 1734, and at that time possessed such a degree of health and strength, as enabled them on Sundays and Prayer-days to walk a mile up a steep hill to Highgate chapel. One of them was Ninety-two at the time of her death. Their parentage was known to few, and their names were corrupted into Melton. By the Crown-office mentioned in the two last paragraphs, we are to understand the Crown-office of the Court of Chancery. H.

Milton

Milton had children only by his first wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah Anne, though deformed, married a master-builder, and died of her first child Mary died single. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spital-fields and lived seventy-six years, to August 1727. This is the daughter of whom public mention has been made. She could repeat the first lines of Homer, the Metamorphoses, and some of Euripides, by having often read them. Yet her incredulity is ready to make a stand. Many repetitions are necessary to fix in memory lines not understood; and why should Milton wish or want to hear them so often! These lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not understood, the beginning raises no more attention than the end; and as those that understand it know commonly the beginning best, its rehearsal will seldom be necessary. It is not likely that Milton required any passage to be so much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he desired the initial lines to be read at all; nor that the daughter weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal sounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addison made a present, and promised some establishment; but died soon after. Queen Caroline sent her fifty guineas. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children, except her son Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the East Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver in Spital-Fields; and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write; and, in opposition to other accounts, represented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, *Comus* was played for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonson, a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. Of this sum one hundred pounds were placed in the stocks, after some debate between her and her husband in whose name it should be entered; and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington. This was the greatest benefaction that *Paradise Lost* ever procured the author's descendants; and to this he, who has now attempted to relate his Life, had the honour of contributing a Prologue.

IN the examination of Milton's poetical works, I shall pay so much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he seems to have had a degree of fondness not very laudable: what he has once written he resolves to preserve, and gives to the public an unfinished poem, which he broke off because he was *nothing satisfied with what he had done*, supposing his readers less nice than himself. These preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and English. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to speak as a critick;

trick; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of sentiment. They are not all of equal value. The elegies excell the odes; and some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared.

The English poems, though they make no promises of *Paradise Lost*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence: if they differ from verses of others, they differ for the worse; for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness; the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought, and violently applied.

That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques shew how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgement into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill *in dandling the Kid.*

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is, we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Minucius, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel.* Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth, there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is of that a of pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply, are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines!

> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a College easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise inventions, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendant of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to shew how objects derive their colours from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

The *chearful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *chearful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks *not unseen* to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milk-maid, and view the labours of the ploughman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant; thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*, or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic scenes of tragick and epick poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some music played by aerial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast, that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend, or a pleasant companion. The seriousness does

does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

The man of *chearfulness*, having exhausted the country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendor, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson, or the wild dramas of Shakspeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *pensive* man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in musick, but he seems to think that chearful notes would have obtained from Pluto a compleat dismission of Eurydice, of whom solemn sounds only procured a conditional release.

For the old age of Chearfulness he makes no provision; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His Chearfulness is without levity, and his Pensiveness without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected, and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination *.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the *Mask of Comus*; in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost*. Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does *Comus* afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination: but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers; who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless Lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience; a mode of com-

* Mr. Warton intimates (and there can be little doubt of the truth of his conjecture) that Milton borrowed many of the images in these two fine poems from "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," a book published in 1624, and at sundry times since, abounding in learning, curious information, and pleasantry. Mr. Warton says, that Milton appears to have been an attentive reader thereof; and to this assertion I add of my own knowledge, that it was a book that Dr. Johnson frequently resorted to, as many others have done, for amusement after the fatigue of study. H.

 munication

munication so contrary to the nature of dramatick representation, that no precedents can support it.

The discourse of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches: they have not the spriteliness of a dialogue, animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question. The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter, with too much tranquility; and when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped that she is not in danger, the Elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher.

Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and enquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good Being.

In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies, to invite attention, and detain it.

The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epick style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.

The *Sonnets* were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and twenty-first are truly intitled to this slender commendation. The fabrick of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Those little pieces may be dispatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine *Paradise Lost*; a poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of criticks, the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with

with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatick energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation; morality must teach him the exact bounds, and different shades, of vice and virtue; from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character, and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

Bossu is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton: the moral of other poems is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential and intrinsick. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to shew the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there must be a *fable*, a narration artfully constructed, so as to excite curiosity, and surprise expectation. In this part of his work, Milton must be confessed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and those that were to follow it: he has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety, that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

The subject of an epick poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and of earth; rebellion against the Supreme King, raised by the highest order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happiness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away. The weakest of his agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whose actions the elements consented, on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers;

——— of

——— of which the least could wield
Those elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their regions;

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence restrains from laying cr waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. T play the motives and actions of beings thus superior, so far as human can examine them, or human imagination represent them, is the task this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much speculation is commonly emp upon the *characters*. The characters in the *Paradise Lost*, which admit amination, are those of angels and of man; of angels good and evil; of in his innocent and sinful state.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of easy c cension and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, a may seem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and G appear occasionally, and act as every incident requires; the solitary fide Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diversified. To Satan, as Ac observes, such sentiments are given as suit *the most exalted and most depraved* Milton has been censured by Clarke *, for the impiety which sometimes l from Satan's mouth. For there are thoughts, as he justly remarks, which n servation of character can justify, because no good man would willingly p them to pass, however transiently, through his own mind. To make Satan as a rebel, without any such expressions as might taint the reader's imagin was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I not but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. Ther Satan's speeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language bellion cannot be the same with that of obedience. The malignity of S foams in haughtiness and obstinacy; but his expressions are commonly ge and no otherwise offensive than as they are wicked.

The other chiefs of the celestial rebellion are very judiciously discrimi in the first and second books; and the ferocious character of Moloch ap both in the battle and the council with exact consistency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, such sentimen innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and m veneration. Their repasts are without luxury, and their diligence without Their addresses to their Maker have little more than the voice of admir and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask, and Innocence left nothing to fear.

But with guilt enter distrust and discord, mutual accusation, and stubborn defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Cr as the avenger of their transgression. At last they seek shelter in his m soften to repentance, and melt in supplication. Both before and after the the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained.

* Author of the "Essay on Study." Dr. J.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epick poem, which immerge the critick in deep consideration, the *Paradise Lost* requires little to be said. It contains the history of a miracle, of Creation and Redemption; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The substance of the narrative is truth; and as truth allows no choice, it is, like necessity, superior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, some slight exceptions may be made. But the main fabrick is immoveably supported.

It is justly remarked by Addison, that this poem has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves.

Of the *machinery*, so called from θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occasional interposition of supernatural power, another fertile topick of critical remarks, here is no room to speak, because every thing is done under the immediate and visible direction of Heaven; but the rule is so far observed, that no part of the action could have been accomplished by any other means.

Of *episodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetic account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are closely connected with the great action; one was necessary to Adam as a warning, the other as a consolation.

To the compleatness or *integrity* of the design nothing can be objected; it has distinctly and clearly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the same length, from which so little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long description of a shield. The short digressions at the beginning of the third, seventh, and ninth books, might doubtless be spared; but superfluities so beautiful, who would take away? or who does not wish that the author of the *Iliad* has gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself? Perhaps no passages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsic paragraphs; and since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased.

The questions, whether the action of the poem be strictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raised by such readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reason.

Milton, though he intituled *Paradise Lost* only a *poem*, yet calls it himself *heroick song*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroism of Adam, because he was overcome; but there is no reason why the hero should not be unfortunate, except established practice, since success and virtue do not go necessarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be suffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if success be necessary, Adam's deceiver was at last crushed; Adam was restored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may securely resume his human rank.

After the scheme and fabrick of the poem, must be considered its component parts, the sentiments and the diction.

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The *sentiments*, as expressive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably just.

Splendid passages, containing lessons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur seldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little assistance to human conduct Its end is to raise the thoughts above sublunary cares or pleasures. Yet the praise of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his singularity of virtue against the scorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curiosity after the planetary motions, with the answer returned by Adam, may be confidently opposed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress, are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.

He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive. The characteristick quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftiness *. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful; he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the councils of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds; he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it,

* Algarotti terms it *gigantesca sublimità Miltoniana*. Dr. J.

through

*beyond the spectacles of books*; and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of *Enna*, where Proserpine was gathering flowers. Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulysses* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools, when he shunned *Charybdis* on the *larboard*. The mythological allusions have been justly censured, as not being always used with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy.

His similies are less numerous, and more various, than those of his predecessors. But he does not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison: his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required. Thus comparing the shield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crouds the imagination with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets; for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings. The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Christian knowledge may be possessed in vain. Ariosto's pravity is generally known; and though the *Deliverance of Jerusalem* may be considered as a sacred subject, the poet has been very sparing of moral instruction.

In Milton every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God, in such a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but those two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and submission. In their first state their affection is tender without weakness, and their piety sublime without presumption. When they have sinned, they shew how discord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to cease in mutual forbearance; how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by sin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A state of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our present misery, it be possible to conceive it; but the sentiments and worship proper to a fallen and offending being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practise.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors, in their first state, conversed with angels; even when folly and sin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean suitors*; and they rise again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human passions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the *Paradise Lost* little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not

not been lost. That passion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguis arising from the consciousness of transgression, and the horrors attending th sense of the Divine Displeasure, are very justly described and forcibly im pressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion; sublimity is th general and prevailing quality in this poem; sublimity variously modifie sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative.

The defects and faults of *Paradise Lost*, for faults and defects every work o man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in dis playing the excellencies of Milton, I have not made long quotations, becaus of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manne mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can tak delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton diminish in some degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my scheme does not admit the frequent notice of verba inaccuracies; which Bentely, perhaps better skilled in grammar than poetry has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed t the obtrusions of a reviser, whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernici ous, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.

The plan of *Paradise Lost* has this inconvenience, that it comprises neithe human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reade finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in whic he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, litt natural curiosity or sympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam and like him must all bewail our offences; we have restless and insidious ene mies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed spirits we have guardians an friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included; in the de scription of heaven and of hell we are surely interested, as we are all to resid hereafter either in the regions of horror or bliss.

But these truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to ou infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversa tion, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; wha we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.

Of the ideas suggested by these awful scenes, from some we recede wit reverence, except when stated hours require their association; and from othe we shrink with horror, or admit them only as salutary inflictions, as counter poises to our interests and passions. Such images rather obstruct the career o fancy than incite it.

Pleasure and terrour are indeed the genuine sources of poetry; but poetica pleasure must be such as human imagination can at least conceive, an poetical terrour such as human strength and fortitude may combat. Th good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; th

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mind sinks under them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

Known truths, however, may take a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himself. Whoever considers the few radical positions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetic operation he expanded them to such extent, and ramified them to so much variety, restrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction.

Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digest, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature, or from story, from an ancient fable, or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study, and exalted by imagination.

It has been therefore said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading *Paradise Lost* we read a book of universal knowledge.

But original deficience cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. *Paradise Lost* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed, and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions.

Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not shew angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*, he has a body; when in his passage between hell and the new world, he is in danger of sinking in the vacuity, and is supported by a gust of rising vapours, he has a body: when he animates the toad, he seems to be mere spirit, that can penetrate matter at pleasure; when he *starts up in his own shape*, he has at least a determined form; and when he is brought before Gabriel he has *a spear and a shield*, which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal spirits*, are *at large, though without number*, in a limited space: yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *crushed in upon their substance, now grown gross by sinning*. This likewise happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown the *sooner for their arms, for unarmed they might easily as spirits have evaded by contraction or remove*. Even as spirits they are

hardly spiritual; for *contraction* and *remove* are images of matter; but if they could have escaped without their armour, they might have escaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel, when he rides on a sun-beam, is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the prowess of Adam.

The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity; and the book, in which it is related, is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be considered that of allegorical persons, which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are, for the most part, suffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do more. To give them any real employment, or ascribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to non-entity. In the *Prometheus* of Æschylus we see *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the *Alcestis* of Euripides, we see *Death*, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man. It is placed in some distant part of space, separated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotick waste and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole* of *aggravated soil*, cemented with *asphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unskilful allegory appears to me one of the greatest faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative some objection may be made. Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in Paradise, and is suffered to go away unmolested. The creation of man is represented as the consequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulsion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *rife in heaven* before his departure.

To find sentiments for the state of innocence, was very difficult; and something of anticipation perhaps is now and then discovered. Adam's discourse of dreams seems not to be the speculation of a new-created being. I know not whether his answer to the angel's reproof for curiosity does not want something of propriety; it is the speech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philosophical notions, especially when the philosophy is false, might have

have been better omitted. The angel, in a comparison, speaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could understand the comparison.

Dryden remarks, that Milton has some flats among his elevations. This is only to say, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part must be for the sake of others; a palace must have passages; a poem must have transitions. It is no more to be required that wit should always be blazing, than that the sun should always stand at noon. In a great work there is a vicissitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a succession of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth; for what other author, eversoared so high, or sustained his flight so long?

Milton being well versed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches something from his companions, his desire of imitating Ariosto's levity has disgraced his work with the *Paradise of Fools*; a fiction not in itself ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.

His play on words, in which he delights too often; his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unnecessary and ungraceful use of terms of art; it is not necessary to mention, because they are easily remarked, and generally censured, and at last bear so little proportion to the whole, that they scarcely deserve the attention of a critick.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance *Paradise Lost*; which he who can put in balance with its beauties must be considered not as nice but as dull, as less to be censured for want of candour, than pitied for want of sensibility.

Of *Paradise Regained*, the general judgement seems now to be right, that it has many parts elegant, and every where instructive. It was not to be supposed that the writer of *Paradise Lost* could ever write without great effusions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wisdom. The basis of *Paradise Regained* is narrow, a dialogue without action can never please like an union of the narrative and dramatic powers. Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by some imitator, it would have claimed and received universal praise.

If *Paradise Regained* has been too much depreciated, *Samson Agonistes* has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and English stages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe.

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many just sentiments and striking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramatic writing; he knew human nature only in the gross, and had never studied the shades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending passions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience must confer.

Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and cast of expression which bears little resemblance to that of any former writer, and which is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by a new language.

This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, says Addison, *sunk under him*. But the truth is, that both in prose and verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantick principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned; for there judgement operates freely, neither softened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but such is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration.

Milton's style was not modified by his subject: what is shown with greater extent in *Paradise Lost*, may be found in *Comus*. One source of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuscan poets: the disposition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps sometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at last, may be said what Jonson says of Spenser, that *he wrote no language*, but has formed what *Butler* calls a *Babylonish Dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning, the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praise of copiousness and variety: he was master of his language in its full extent; and has selected the melodious words with such diligence, that from his book alone the Art of English Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, something must be said of his *versification*. *The measure*, he says, *is the English heroick verse without rhyme*. Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and some in his own country. The Earl of Surry is said to have translated one of Virgil's books without rhyme; and, besides our tragedies, a few short poems had appeared in blank verse, particularly one, tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana, and probably written by Raleigh himself. These petty performances cannot be supposed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Trissino's *Italia Liberata*; and, finding blank verse easier than rhyme, was desirous of persuading himself that it is better.

*Rhyme*, he says, and says truly, *is no necessary adjunct of true poetry*. But perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre or musick is no necessary adjunct: it is however by the musick of metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages; and in languages melodiously constructed with a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another; where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The musick of the English heroick line strikes the ear so faintly that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together: this

this co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick, *seems to be verse only to the eye.*

Poetry may subsist without rhyme, but English poetry will not often please; nor can rhyme ever be safely spared but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style*; has neither the easiness of prose, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents, not one is popular; what reason could urge in its defence, has been confuted by the ear.

But, whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymer; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing, may write blank verse; but those that hope only to please, must condescend to rhyme.

The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epick poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praise, nor solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance, and in blindness, but difficulties vanished at his touch; he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first.

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# BUTLER.

OF the great author of Hudibras there is a life prefixed to the latter editions of his poem, by an unknown writer, and therefore of disputable authority; and some account is incidentally given by Wood, who confesses the uncertainty of his own narrative; more however than they knew cannot now be learned, and nothing remains but to compare and copy them.

SAMUEL

SAMUEL BUTLER was born in the parish of Strensham in Worcestershire, according to his biographer, in 1612. This account Dr. Nash finds confirmed by the register. He was christened Feb. 14.

His father's condition is variously represented. Wood mentions him as competently wealthy; but Mr. Longueville, the son of Butler's principal friend says he was an honest farmer with some small estate, who made a shift to educate his son at the grammar school of Worcester, under Mr. Henry Bright* from whose care he removed for a short time to Cambridge; but, for want of money was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford; but at last makes him pass six or seven years at Cambridge, without knowing in what hall or college: yet it can hardly be imagined that he lived so long in either university, but as belonging to one house or another; and it is still less likely that he could have so long inhabited a place of learning with so little distinction as to leave his residence uncertain. Dr. Nash has discovered that his father was owner of a house and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, still called *Butler's tenement*.

Wood has his information from his brother, whose narrative placed him at Cambridge, in opposition to that of his neighbours, which sent him to Oxford. The brother's seems the best authority, till, by confessing his inability to tell his hall or college, he gives reason to suspect that he was resolved to bestow on him an academical education; but durst not name a college, for fear of detection.

He was for some time, according to the author of his Life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's Croomb in Worcestershire, an eminent justice of the peace. In his service he had not only leisure for study, but for recreation; his amusements were musick and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendship of the celebrated Cooper. Some pictures, said to be his, were shown to Dr. Nash, at Earl's Croomb; but when he enquired for them some years afterwards, he found them destroyed, to stop windows, and owns that they hardly deserved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Countess of Kent, where

* These are the words of the author of the short account of Butler, prefixed to Hudibras, which Dr. Johnson, notwithstanding what he says above, seems to have supposed was written by Mr. Longueville, the father; but the contrary is to be inferred from a subsequent passage wherein the author laments that he had neither such an acquaintance nor interest with Mr. Longueville, as to procure from him the golden remains of Butler there mentioned. He was probably led into this mistake by a note in the Biog. Brit. p. 1077, signifying, that the son of this gentleman was living in 1736.

Of this friend and generous patron of Butler, Mr. William Longueville, I find an account written by a person who was well acquainted with him, to this effect, viz. that he was a conveyancing lawyer, and a bencher of the Inner Temple, and had raised himself from a low beginning to very great eminence in that profession; that he was eloquent, and learned, of spotless integrity; that he supported an aged father who had ruined his fortunes by extravagance, and by his industry and application re-edified a ruined family: that he supported Butler, who, but for him, must literally have starved, and received from him as a recompence the papers called his Remains. Life of the Lord-keeper Guildford, p. 289. These have since been given to the public by Mr. Thyer of Manchester; and the originals are now in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Farmer, master of Emanuel College, Cambridge. H.

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he had the use of a library; and so much recommended himself to Selden, that he was often employed by him in literary business. Selden, as is well known, was steward to the Countess, and is supposed to have gained much of his wealth by managing her estate.

In what character Butler was admitted into that Lady's service, how long he continued in it, and why he left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The vicissitudes of his condition placed him afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's officers. Here he observed so much of the character of the sectaries, that he is said to have written or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely that such a design would be formed in a place where he saw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undisguised in the confidence of success.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made secretary to the Earl of Carbury, president of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the stewardship of Ludlow Castle, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family; and lived, says Wood, upon her fortune, having studied the common law, but never practised it. A fortune she had, says his biographer, but it was lost by bad securities.

In 1663 was published the first part, containing three cantos, of the poem of Hudibras, which, as Prior relates, was made known at Court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, it was necessarily admired: the king quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of the royalists applauded it. Every eye watched for the golden shower, which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.

In 1664 the second part appeared; the curiosity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praised and elated. But praise was his whole reward. Clarendon, says Wood, gave him reason to hope for "places and employments of value and credit;" but no such advantages did he ever obtain. It is reported that the King once gave him three hundred guineas; but of this temporary bounty I find no proof.

Wood relates that he was secretary to Villiers Duke of Buckingham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this is doubted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to have been his frequent benefactor. That both these accounts are false there is reason to suspect, from a story told by Packe, in his account of the Life of Wycherley; and from some verses which Mr. Thyer has published in the author's Remains.

"Mr. Wycherley," says Packe, "had always laid hold of an opportunity which offered of representing to the Duke of Buckingham how well Mr. Butler had deserved of the royal family, by writing his inimitable Hudibras; and that it was a reproach to the Court, that a person of his loyalty and wit should suffer in obscurity, and under the wants he did. The duke always seemed to hearken to him with attention enough; and after some time, undertook

" dertook to recommend his pretensions to his Majesty. Mr. Wycherley, i
" hopes to keep him steady to his word, obtained of his grace to name a da
" when he might introduce that modest and unfortunate poet to his ne
" patron. At last an appointment was made, and the place of meeting w
" agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and his friend attended accordingly
" the Duke joined them; but, as the d——l would have it, the door of th
" room where they sat was open, and his Grace, who had seated himself nea
" it, observing a pimp of his acquaintance (the creature too was a knight) tri
" by with a brace of Ladies, immediately quitted his engagement, to follo
" another kind of business, at which he was more ready than in doing goo
" offices to men of desert; though no one was better qualified than he, both i
" regard to his fortune and understanding, to protect them; and, from that tim
" to the day of his death, poor Butler never found the least effect of his promise!

Such is the story. The verses are written with a degree of acrimony, such as neglect and disappointment might naturally excite; and such as it would b hard to imagine Butler capable of expressing against a man who had any clair to his gratitude.

Notwithstanding this discouragement and neglect, he still prosecuted his de sign; and in 1678 published the third part, which still leaves the poem imperfec and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events th action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought strang that he should stop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is suf ficiently unpleasing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it pro per to be in jest no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville, having unsuccessfully solicited a sub scription for his interment in Westminster Abbey, buried him at his own cost i the church-yard of Covent Garden *. Dr. Simon Patrick read the service.

Granger was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr Lowndes of the treasury, that Butler had a yearly pension of an hundre pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham and by the reproaches of Dryden; and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About sixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London, an a friend to Butler's principles, bestowed on him a monument in Westminste Abbey, thus inscribed:

M. S.
SAMUELIS BUTLERI,
Qui *Strenshamiæ* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612,
obiit *Lond.* 1680.
Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;
Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, fœlix:
*Satyrici* apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;
Quo simulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,

* In a note in the " Biographia Britannica," p. 1075, he is said, on the authority of th younger Mr. Longueville, to have lived for some years in Rose-street, Covent Garden, an also that he died there; the latter of these particulars is rendered highly probable by his bein interred in the cemetery of that parish.

Et Perduellium scelera liberrime exagitavit;
Scriptorum in suo genere, Primus & Postremus,
Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,
Deesset etiam mortuo Tumulus,
Hoc tandem posito marmore, curavit
JOHANNIS BARBER, Civis *Londinensis*, 1721.

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous orks: I know not by whom collected, or by what authority ascertained *; id lately two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester, idubitably genuine. From none of these pieces can his life be traced, or his haracter discovered. Some verses, in the last collection, shew him to have een among those who ridiculed the institution of the Royal Society, of which e enemies were for some time very numerous and very acrimonious, for hat reason it is hard to conceive, since the philosophers professed not to dvance doctrines, but to produce facts; and the most zealous enemy of inovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may ppose hypothetical temerity.

In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

THE poem of Hudibras is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast; as the images which it exhibits are domestick, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar. We must not, however, suffer the pride, which we assume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the history of Don Quixote; a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace.

Cervantes shews a man, who having, by the incessant perusal of incredible tales, subjected his understanding to his imagination, and familiarised his mind by pertinacious meditation to trains of incredible events and scenes of impossible existence, goes out in the pride of knighthood to redress wrongs, and defend virgins, to rescue captive princesses, and tumble usurpers from their thrones; attended by a squire, whose cunning, too low for the suspicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his master.

The hero of Butler is a Presbyterian Justice, who, in the confidence of legal authority, and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repress superstition and correct abuses, accompanied by an Independent Clerk, disputatious and obstinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had so much kindness for Don Quixote, that however he embarrasses him with absurd distresses, he gives him so much sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem: wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchless dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderness; he chooses not that any pity should be shewn or respect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

* They were collected into one, and published in 12mo. 1732. H.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and describing his person and habiliments, the author seems to labour with a tumultuous confusion of dissimilar ideas. He had read the history of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a Presbyterian magistrate, and tried to unite the absurdities of both, however distant, in one personage. Thus he gives him the pedantic ostentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He sends him out a *colonelling*, and yet never brings him within sight of war.

If Hudibras be considered as the representative of the Presbyterians, it is not easy to say why his weapons should be represented as ridiculous or useless; for, whatever judgement might be passed upon their knowledge or their arguments, experience had sufficiently shown that their swords were not to be despised.

The hero, thus compounded of swaggerer and pedant, of knight and justice, is led forth to action, with his squire Ralpho, an Independent enthusiast.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, since it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckless adventures, which would give occasion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*, to expose the ridiculous rigour of the sectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum, to make superstition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourse to the low retailer of the law, discover the fraudulent practices of different professions.

What series of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or punished his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work must have had, as it seems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenser; the action could not have been one; those could only have been a succession of incidents, each of which might have happened without the rest, and which could not all co-operate to any single conclusion.

The discontinuity of the action might however have been easily forgiven, if there had been action enough: but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of Hudibras, as in the history of Thucydides, there is more said than done. The scenes are too seldom changed, and the attention is tired with long conversation.

It is indeed much more easy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every position makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an answer. When two disputants are engaged upon a complicated and extensive question, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controversy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the possibilities of life, or that life itself affords little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will cost to form such a combination of circumstances, as shall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reason.

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it, by quicker reciprocation, by seasonable interruptions, by sudden questions, and by a nearer approach to dramatick spriteliness; without which fictitious speeches will always tire, however sparkling with sentences, and however variegated with allusions.

The great source of pleasure is variety. Uniformity must tire at last, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is disappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the present, whoever would please must make provision. The skilful writer *miscet, mulcet*, makes a due distribution of the still and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and those necessary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praised.

If inexhaustible wit could give perpetual pleasure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought so many remote images so happily together? It is scarcely possible to peruse a page without finding some association of images that was never found before. By the first paragraph the reader is amused, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more strained to astonishment; but astonishment is a toilsome pleasure; he is soon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

Omnia vult belle Matho dicere, dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.

Imagination is useless without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unless study and observation supply materials to be combined. Butler's treasures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topic employs his mind, he shews himself qualified to expand and illustrate it with all the accessaries that books can furnish: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken general surveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inspection.

If the French boast the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the most valuable parts of his performance are those which retired study and native wit cannot supply. He that merely makes a book from books may be useful, but can scarcely be great. Butler had not suffered life to glide beside him unseen or unobserved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, interest, and passion. From such remarks proceeded that great number of sententious distichs which have passed into conversation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general stock of practical knowledge.

When any work has been viewed and admired, the first question of intelligent curiosity is, how was it performed? Hudibras was not a hasty effusion; it was not produced by a sudden tumult of imagination, or a short paroxysm of violent labour. To accumulate such a mass of sentiments at the call of accidental desire, or of sudden necessity, is beyond the reach and power of the most active and comprehensive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester, the excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could shew something like Hudibras in prose. He has in his possession the common-place book, in which Butler reposited, not such events or precepts as are gathered by reading, but such remarks, similitudes, allusions, assemblages, or inferences, as occasion prompted, or meditation produced, those thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be usefully applied to some future purpose. Such is the labour of those who write for immortality.

But

But human works are not easily found without a perishable part. Of the ancient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppressive. Of Hudibras, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day less intelligible, and less striking. What Cicero says of philosophy is true likewise of wit and humour, that "time effaces the "fictions of opinion, and confirms the determinations of Nature." Such manners as depend upon standing relations and general passions are co-extended with the race of man; but those modifications of life, and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverseness, or at best of some accidental influence or transient persuasion, must perish with their parents.

Much therefore of that humour which transported the century with merriment is lost to us, who do not know the sour solemnity, the sullen superstition, the gloomy moroseness, and the stubborn scruples of the ancient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and study understand the lines in which they are satyrised. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.

It is scarcely possible, in the regularity and composure of the present time, to image the tumult of absurdity, and clamour of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, disordered practice, and disturbed both public and private quiet, in that age when subordination was broken, and he was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator who could hatch a half-formed notion produced it to the public; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wisdom of the nation is very reasonably supposed to reside in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower classes of the people, when in one of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell it was seriously proposed, that all the records in the Tower should be burnt, that all memory of things past should be effaced, and that the whole system of life should commence anew?

We have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of mince pies and plumb porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan, who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that if he would treat him at an ale-house with beer, brewed for all times and seasons, he should accept his kindness, but would have none of his superstitious meats and drinks.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker upon *Lots* may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a dye, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning.

Astrology, however, against which so much of the satire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans, than of others. It had in that time a very extensive dominion. Its predictions raised hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and when the king

was.

a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, an astrologer was consulted what hour would be found most favourable to an escape.

What effect this poem had upon the public, whether it shamed imposture or reclaimed credulity, is not easily determined. Cheats can seldom stand long against laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore fast away; though some men of knowledge, and Dryden among them, continued to believe that conjunctions and oppositions had a great part in the distribution of good or evil, and in the government of sublunary things.

Poetical action ought to be probable upon certain suppositions, and such probability as burlesque requires is here violated only by one incident. Nothing can shew more plainly the necessity of doing something, and the difficulty of finding something to do, than that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the flagellation of Sancho, not the most agreeable fiction of Cervantes; very suitable indeed to the manners of that age and nation, which ascribed wonderful efficacy to voluntary penances; but so remote from the practice and opinions of the Hudibrastick time, that judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The diction of this poem is grossly familiar, and the numbers purposely neglected, except in a few places, where the thoughts by their native excellence secure themselves from violation, being such as mean language cannot express. The mode of versification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroick measure was not rather chosen. To the critical sentence of Dryden the highest reverence would be due, were not his decisions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wished to change the measure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were heroick, the diction should still remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural composition. If he preferred a general stateliness both of sound and words, he can be only understood to wish Butler had undertaken a different work.

The measure is quick, spritely and colloquial, suitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the sentiments. But such numbers and such diction can gain regard only when they are used by a writer whose vigour of fancy and copiousness of knowledge entitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and justness of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in careless versification, it will only be said, "Pauper "videri Cinna vult, & est pauper." The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticism may justly doom them to perish together.

Nor even though another Butler should arise, would another Hudibras obtain the same regard. Burlesque consists in a disproportion between the style and the sentiments, or between the adventitious sentiments and the fundamental subject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All disproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleasure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a strange thing; but when it is no longer strange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition

repetition detects itself; and the reader learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is to shew that they can be played.

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# ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rochester, the son of Henry Earl of Rochester, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot so often mentioned in Clarendon's History, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire. After a grammatical education at the school of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College in 1659, only twelve years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with some other persons of high rank, made master of arts by Lord Clarendon in person

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at his return, devoted himself to the Court. In 1665 he went to sea with Sandwich, and distinguished himself at Bergen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next summer served again on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a message of reproof to send to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in an open boat, went and returned amidst the storm of shot.

But his reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with slinking away in street quarrels, and leaving his companions to shift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a story of his refusal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally subdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vitious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in excess, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confessed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or so much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be master of himself.

In this state he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. He often pursued low amours in mean disguises, and always acted with great exactness and dexterity the characters which he assumed.

He once erected a stage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made physick part of his study, is said to have practised it successfully.

He

He was so much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bed-chamber, and comptroller of Woodstock Park.

Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study: he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one and thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet, to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the course of his life, and from whom he received such conviction of the reasonableness of moral duty and the truth of Christianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of those salutary consequences is given by Burnet, in a book intituled, *Some Passages of the Life and Death of* John *Earl of* Rochester; which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had compleated his thirty-fourth year; and was so worn away by a long illness, that life went out without a struggle.

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and sallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a man whose name was heard of so often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished; and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reason to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineness was ascertained. The first edition was published in the year of his death, with an air of concealment, professing in the title page to be printed at *Antwerp*.

Of some of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The Imitation of Horace's Satire, the Verses to Lord Mulgrave, the Satire against Man, the Verses upon *Nothing*, and perhaps some others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps most of those which this collection exhibits.

As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

His songs have no particular character; they tell, like other songs, in smooth and

and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismission and desertion, al and inconstancy, with the common places of artificial courtship. Th commonly smooth and easy; but have little nature, and little sentiment

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. I reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has since bee frequent, of ancient poetry to present times: and perhaps few will be where the parallelism is better preserved than in this. The versificat indeed sometimes careless, but it is sometimes vigorous and weighty.

The strongest effort of his Muse is his poem upon *Nothing*. He is nc first who has chosen this barren topick for the boast of his fertility. is a poem called *Nihil* in Latin by *Passerat*, a poet and critick of the sixt century in France; who, in his own epitaph, expresses his zeal for poetry thus:

—Molliter ossa quiescent
Sint modo carminibus non onerata malis.

His works are not common, and therefore I shall subjoin his verses.

In examining this performance, *Nothing* must be considered as h not only a negative but a kind of positive signification; as I need no thieves, I have *nothing*, and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the part of the sentence it is taken negatively; in the second it is taken posit as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a question, whether he s use *à rien faire*, or *à ne rien faire*; and the first was preferred, because it *rien* a sense in some sort positive. Nothing can be a subject only in its pc sense, and such a sense is given it in the first line;

*Nothing*, thou elder brother ev'n to shade.

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious bo *Umbra*, by Wowerus, which, having told the qualities of *Shade*, concludes a poem in which are these lines:

Jam primum terram validis circumspice claustris
Suspensam totam, decus admirabile mundi
Terrasque tractusque maris, camposque liquentes
Aeris & vasti laqueata palatia cœli—
Omnibus UMBRA prior.

The positive sense is generally preserved, with great skill, throug whole poem; though sometimes in a subordinate sense, the negative n is injudiciously mingled. Passerat confounds the two senses.

Another of his most vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop, in a poem called *The Praise of Satire*, had some lines like these *:

He who can push into a midnight fray,
His brave companion, and then run away,
Leaving him to be murdered in the street,
Then put it off with some buffoon conceit,
Him, thus dishonour'd, for a wit you own,
And court him as top fidler of the town.

This was meant of Rochester, whose *buffoon conceit* was, I suppose, a s often mentioned, that *every Man would be a Coward if he dare*; and drew

* I quote from memory. Dr. J.

those furious verses; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending these lines:

> Thou canst hurt no man's fame, with thy ill word;
> Thy pen is full as harmless as thy sword.

f the Satire against *Man*, Rochester can only claim what remains when boileau's part is taken away.

all his works there is spriteliness and vigour, and every where may be d tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence. What e can be expected from a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, ended before the abilities of many other men began to be displayed?

## Poema Cl. V. Joannis Passeratii,

Regii in Academia Parisiensi Professoris,

Ad ornatissimum virum Erricum Memmium.

Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ,
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis.
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?
Usque adeò ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?
Quod nusquam est, potius nova per vestigia quæram.
Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes
Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus,
Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius auro.
Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos;
Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,
Ausonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,
Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Camœnæ.
E cœlo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,
Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis
Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.
Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum,
Quòd si hinc majestas et vis divina probatur,
Num quid honore deûm, num quid dignabimur aris?
Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almæ,
Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,
Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura:
In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tumultu:
Justum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL est in fœdere tutum.
Felix cui NIHIL est, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)
Non timet insidias; fures, incendia temnit:
Sollicitas sequitur nullo sub judice lites.
Ille ipse invictis qui subjicit omnia fatis
Zenonis sapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.
Socraticique gregis fuit ista scientia quondam,
Scire NIHIL, studio cui nunc incumbitur uni.
Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didicisse juventus,
Ad magnas quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum,
Nosce NIHIL, nosces fertur quod Pythagoreæ
Grano hærere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.
Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ

Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,
Arcano instantes operi, & carbonibus atris,
Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,
Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL usque requirunt.
Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit:
Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ:
Et Phœbo ignotum NIHIL est, NIHIL altius astris,
Túque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,
Omnem in naturam penetrans, et in abdita rerum,
Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidêris.
Sole tamen NIHIL est, & puro clarius igne.
Tange NIHIL, dicesque NIHIL sine corpore tangi.
Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.
Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL sine voce, volátque
Absque ope pennarum, & graditur sine cruribus ullis
Absque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.
Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi,
Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura tentet
Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,
Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen,
Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.
Vexerit & quemvis trans-mœstas portitor undas,
Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.
Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,
Parcarúmque colos, & inexorabile pensum.
Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes
Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu:
Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi:
Diique NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura
Commemorem? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,
Splendidius NIHIL est; NIHIL est Jove denique majus.
Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis:
Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus.

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# ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, Earl of Roscommon, was the so
James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, sister to the earl of Straf
He was born in Ireland, during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being
his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own surname. His father, the
earl of Roscommon, had been converted by Usher to the protestant relig
and when the popish rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the fami
great danger from the fury of the Irish, sent for his godson, and placed hi
his own seat in Yorkshire, where he was instructed in Latin; which he lea
so as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to r
the rules of grammar.

Such is the account given by Mr. *Fenton*, from whose notes on Waller
of this account must be borrowed, though I know not whether all that h

ies is certain. The instructor whom he assigns to Roscommon is one Dr. *Hall*, y whom he cannot mean the famous *Hall*, then an old man and a bishop.

When the storm broke out upon Strafford, his house was a shelter no longer; nd Dillon, by the advice of Usher, was sent to *Caen*, where the Protestants ad then an university, and continued his studies under *Bochart*.

Young Dillon, who was sent to study under Bochart, and who is represented s having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was sent to Caen, is certain: that he was a great scholar, may be doubted.

At Caen he is said to have had some preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

"The lord Roscommon, being a boy of ten years of age, at Caen in Nor-"mandy, one day was, as it were, madly extravagant in playing, leaping, get-"ting over the tables, boards, &c. He was wont to be sober enough; they "said, God grant this bodes no ill-luck to him! In the heat of this extra-"vagant fit, he cries out, *My father is dead.* A forthnight after, news came "from Ireland that his father was dead. This account I had from Mr. "Knolles, who was his governor, and then with him,—since secretary to the "earl of Strafford; and I have heard his lordship's relations confirm the "same." *Aubrey's Miscellany.*

The present age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, because better evidence of a fact cannot easily be found than is here offered, and it must be by preserving such relations that we may at last judge how much they are to be regarded. If we stay to examine this account, we shall see difficulties on both sides: here is the relation of a fact given by a man who had no interest to deceive, and who could not be deceived himself; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted to discover not a future but only a distant event, the knowledge of which is of no use to him to whom it is revealed. Between these difficulties, what way shall be found? Is reason or testimony to be rejected; I believe what Osborne says of an appearance of sanctity may be applied to such impulses or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly slight them, because they may be true; but do not easily trust them, because they may be false.*

The state both of England and Ireland was at this time such, that he who was absent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roscommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amused himself with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon skill.

At the Restoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of Pensioners, and learned so much of the dissoluteness of the court, that he addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by

by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brou upon him its usual concomitants, extravagance and distress.

After some time a dispute about part of his estate forced him into Irela where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and i with an adventure thus related by *Fenton*.

"He was at Dublin as much as ever distempered with the same fatal aff "tion for play, which engaged him in one adventure that well deserves to "related. As he returned to his lodgings from a gaming-table, he was attacl "in the dark by three ruffians, who were employed to assassinate him. T "Earl defended himself with so much resolution, that he dispatched one "the aggressors; whilst a gentleman, accidentally passing that way, interpos "and disarmed another: the third secured himself by flight. This gener "assistant was a disbanded officer, of a good family and fair reputation; wl "by what we call the partiality of fortune, to avoid censuring the iniquit "of the times, wanted even a plain suit of clothes to make a decent a "pearance at the Castle. But his lordship, on this occasion, presenting h "to the Duke of Ormond, with great importunity prevailed with his gra "that he might resign his post of captain of the guards to his friend; which "about three years the gentleman enjoyed, and, upon his death, the duke "turned the commission to his generous benefactor."

When he had finished his business, he returned to London; was made M ter of the Horse to the Dutchess of York: and married the Lady Franc daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.

He now busied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of society for refining our language and fixing its standard; *in imitation*, says Fe ton, *of those learned and polite societies with which he had been acquainted abroad.* this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him.

The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the minist of Oxford; but it has never since been publickly mentioned, though at tl time great expectations were formed by some, of its establishment and its effec Such a society might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but th it would produce what is expected from it may be doubted.

The Italian academy seems to have obtained its end. The language w refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French acaden thought that they refined their language, and doubtless thought rightly; b the event has not shewn that they fixed it; for the French of the prese time is very different from that of the last century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an acad mician's place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendan were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the le disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly.

But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would its authority? In absolute governments, there is sometimes a general reveren paid to all that has the sanction of power, and the countenance of greatness. Hc little this is the state of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age

whi

ich it is a kind of public sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. e edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only at they might be sure to disobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; t what prevention can be found? The present manners of the nation would ride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer should iticise himself.

All hopes of new literary institutions were quickly suppressed by the conntious turbulence of King James's reign; and Roscommon, foreseeing that me violent concussion of the State was at hand, purposed to retire to Rome, lleging, that *it was best to sit near the chimney when the chamber smoaked*; a sennce, of which the application seems not very clear.

His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was so impatient either of indrance or of pain, that he submitted himself to a French empirick, who is aid to have repelled the disease into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice hat expressed the most fervent devotion, two lines of his own version of *Dies Iræ*:

My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forsake me in my end.

He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Westminster-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton:

"In his writings," says Fenton, "we view the image of a mind which was "naturally serious and solid: richly furnished and adorned with all the orna- "ments of learning, unaffectedly disposed in the most regular and elegant "order. His imagination might have probably been more fruitful and "sprightly, if his judgment had been less severe. But that severity (delivered "in a masculine, clear, and succinct style) contributed to make him so emi- "nent in the didactical manner, that no man, with justice, can affirm he was "ever equalled by any of our nation, without confessing at the same time "that he is inferior to none. In some other kinds of writing his genius seems "to have wanted fire to attain the point of perfection; but who can attain it?"

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that ley had been displayed in large volumes and numerous performances? who ould not, after the perusal of this character, be surprised to find that all the roofs of this genius, and knowledge and judgement, are not sufficient to form ingle book, or to appear otherwise than in conjunction with the works of me other writer of the same petty size*? But thus it is that characters are

* They were published together with those of Duke, in an octavo volume, in 1717. The litor, whoever he was, professes to have taken great care to procure and insert all of his lordip's poems that are truly genuine. The truth of this assertion is flatly denied by the author f an account of Mr. John Pomfret, prefixed to his Remains; who asserts, that the Prospect f Death was written by that person many years after lord Roscommon's decease; as also, hat the paraphrase of the Prayer of Jeremy was written by a gentleman of the name of Southurt, living in the year 1724. H.

written:

written: we know somewhat, and we imagine the rest. The observation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and sprightly if his judgement had been less severe, may be answered, by a remarker somewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary supposition, that his judgement would probably have been less severe, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppose judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have necessarily less of one as they have more of the other.

We must allow of Roscommon, what Fenton has not mentioned so distinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verse before Addison; and that, if there are not so many or so great beauties in his compositions as in those of some contemporaries, there are at least fewer faults. Nor is this his highest praise; for Mr Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,
Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays.

His great work is his Essay on Translated Verse; of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his Miscellanies:

"It was my Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse," says Dryden, "which made me uneasy, till I tried whether or no I was capable of following "his rules, and of reducing the speculation into practice. For many a fair "precept in poetry is like a seeming demonstration in mathematicks, very "specious in the diagram, but failing in the mechanick operation. I think I "have generally observed his instructions: I am sure my reason is sufficiently "convinced both of their truth and usefulness; which, in other words, is to "confess no less a vanity than to pretend that I have, at least in some places, "made examples to his rules."

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found to be little more than one of those cursory civilities which one author pays to another; for when the sum of lord Roscommon's precepts is collected, it will not be easy to discover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of translation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abstract his mind from the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the sense of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author should be suitable to the translator's genius; that he should be such as may deserve a translation; that he who intends to translate him should endeavour to understand him; that perspicuity should be studied, and unusual and uncouth names sparingly inserted; and that the style of the original should be copied in its elevation and depression. These are the rules that are celebrated as so definite and important; and for the delivery of which to mankind so much honour has been paid. Roscommon has indeed deserved his praises had they been given with discernment, and bestowed not on the rules themselves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

Essay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The story
quack, borrowed from Boileau, was not worth the importation: he has
ded the British and Saxon mythology:

I grant that from some mossy idol oak,
In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* spoke.

c, as I think Gildon has observed, belonged to the British druids, and
d *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he so libe-
pposes, he certainly had no knowledge.

interposition of a long paragraph of blank verses is unwarrantably
ous. Latin poets might as well have introduced a series of iambicks
their heroicks.

next work is the translation of the Art of Poetry; which has received
opinion, not less praise than it deserves. Blank verse, left merely to
nbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly
t itself without bold figures and striking images. A poem frigidly
ck, without rhyme, is so near to prose, that the reader only scorns it
tending to be verse.

ing disentangled himself from the difficulties of rhyme, he may justly
ected to give the sense of Horace with great exactness, and to suppress
tilty of sentiment for the difficulty of expressing it. This demand,
er, his translation will not satisfy; what he found obscure, I do not
that he has ever cleared.

ong his smaller works, the Eclogue of Virgil and the *Dies Iræ* are well
ted; though the best line in the *Dies Iræ* is borrowed from Dryden.
rm, succeeding poets have borrowed from Roscommon.

he verses on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you* are offensively con-
ed; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

versions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which
recompensed by much elegance or vigour.

political verses are spritely, and when they were written must have
ery popular.

the scene of *Guarini*, and the prologue to *Pompey*, Mrs. Philips, in her
to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the history.

ord Roscommon," says she, "is certainly one of the most promising
ng noblemen in Ireland. He has paraphrased a Psalm admirably, and
ene of *Pastor Fido* very finely, in some places much better than Sir
hard Fanshaw. This was undertaken merely in compliment to me,
happened to say that it was the best scene in Italian, and the worst in
glish. He was only two hours about it. It begins thus:

"Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat
"Of silent horror, Rest's eternal seat."

m these lines, which are since somewhat mended, it appears that he
ot think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticism without
l.

When

When Mrs. Philips was in Ireland, some ladies, that had seen her tran tion of Pompey, resolved to bring it on the stage at Dublin; and, to prom their design, Lord Roscommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edw Dering an epilogue; "which," says she, "are the best performances "those kinds I ever saw." If this is not criticism, it is at least gratitu The thought of bringing Cæsar and Pompey into Ireland, the only count over which Cæsar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roscommon's works, the judgement of the public seems to be rig He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigoro and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did n enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to Engli literature.

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# OTWAY.

OF THOMAS OTWAY, one of the first names in the English dram little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biograph can take pleasure in relating.

He was born at Trottin in Sussex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphre Otway, rector of *Woolbeding*. From Winchester-school, where he was edu cated, he was entered, in 1669, a commoner of Christ-church; but left th university without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatienc of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is nc known.

It seems likely that he was in hope of being busy and conspicuous: for h went to London, and commenced player; but found himself unable to gai any reputation on the stage*.

This kind of inability he shared with Shakspeare and Jonson, as h shared likewise some of their excellencies. It seems reasonable to ex pect that a great dramatic poet should without difficulty become a grea actor; that he who can feel, could express; that he who can excite passion should exhibit with great readiness its external modes: but since experienc has fully proved that of those powers, whatever be their affinity, one ma be possessed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other it must be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on dif ferent use of the same faculty; that the actor must have a pliancy of mien, flexibility of countenance, and a variety of tones, which the poet may be easil

* In *Roscius Anglicanus* by Downes the prompter, p. 34, we learn that it was the characte of the King in Mrs. Behn's *Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom*, which Mr. Otway attempted to perform and failed in. This event appears to have happened in the year 1672. E supposed

supposed to want; or that the attention of the poet and the player have been differently employed; the one has been considering thought, and the other action; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himself such powers as might qualify for a dramatick author; and, in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced *Alcibiades*, a tragedy; whether from the *Alcibiade* of *Palapart*, I have not means to enquire. Langbain, the great detector of plagiarism, is silent.

In 1677 he published *Titus and Berenice*, translated from Rapin, with the *Cheats of Scapin* from Moliere; and 1678 *Friendship in Fashion*, a comedy, which, whatever might be its first reception, was, upon its revival at Drury-lane in 1749, hissed off the stage for immorality and obscenity.

Want of morals, or of decency, did not in those days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment; and Otway is said to have been at this time a favourite companion of the dissolute wits. But as he who desires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himself, those whom Otway frequented had no purpose of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They desired only to drink and laugh; their fondness was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship. Men of wit, says one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to share their riots *from which they were dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of imminence.*

Some exception, however, must be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural sons, procured for him a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But Otway did not prosper in his military character; for he soon left his commission behind him, whatever was the reason, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rochester mentions with merciless insolence in the *Session of the Poets:*

> Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,
> And swears for heroicks he writes best of any;
> Don Carlos his pocket so amply had fill'd,
> That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.
> But Apollo had seen his face on the stage,
> And prudently did not think fit to engage
> The scum of a play-house, for the prop of an age.

*Don Carlos*, from which he is represented as having received so much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the Lampoon, to have had great success, and is said to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reasonable to doubt, as so long a continuance of one play upon the stage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time: when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffused through the whole people, and the audience, consisting nearly of the same persons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The *Orphan was exhibited in 1680.* This is one of the few plays that keep *possession of the stage, and has* pleased for almost a century, through all the vicis-

vicissitudes of dramatick fashion. Of this play nothing new can easily be said. It is a domestick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehension of thought or elegance of expression. But if the heart is interested, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be missed.

The same year produced *the History and Fall of Caius Marius*, much of which is borrowed from the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare.

In 1683* was published the first, and next year† the second, parts of *The Soldier's Fortune* two comedies now forgotten: and in 1685‡ his last and greatest dramatick work, *Venice preserved*, a tragedy, which still continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithstanding the want of morality in the original design, and the despicable scenes of vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action. By comparing this with his *Orphan*, it will appear that his images were by time become stronger, and his language more energetick. The striking passages are in every mouth; and the publick seems to judge rightly of the faults and excellencies of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own breast.

Together with those plays he wrote the poems which are in the present collection, and translated from the French the *History of the Triumvirate*.

All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the tarriers of the law; he retired to a publick house on Tower-hill, where he is said to have died of want; or as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as is reported, almost naked, in the rage of hunger, and finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that Pope, who lived near enough to be well informed, relates in Spence's memorials, that he died of a fever caught by violent pursuit of a thief that had robbed one of his friends. But that indigence, and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, pressed hard upon him, has never been denied, whatever immediate cause might bring him to the grave.

Of the poems which the present collection admits, the longest is the *Poet's complaint of his Muse*, part of which I do not understand; and in that which is less obscure I find little to commend. The language is often gross, and the numbers are harsh. Otway had not much cultivated versification nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the passions, to which Dryden § in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears by some of his verses to have been a zealous royalist; and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

* 1681. † 1684. ‡ 1682. § In his preface to Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*. Dr. J.

# WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colshill in Hertfordshire. His father was Robert Waller, Esq; of Agmondesham in Buckinghamshire, whose family was originally a branch of the Kentish Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the same county, and sister to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him a yearly income of three thousand five hundred pounds; which, rating together the value of money and the customs of life, we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thousand at the present time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eaton; and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge. He was sent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his sixteenth year, and frequented the court of James the First, where he heard a very remarkable conversation, which the writer of the Life prefixed to his Works, who seems to have been well informed of facts, though he may sometimes err in chronology, has delivered as indubitably certain:

"He found Dr. Andrews, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Neale, bishop of "Durham, standing behind his Majesty's chair; and there happened some-"thing extraordinary," continues this writer, "in the conversation, those "prelates had with the king, on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His "Majesty asked the bishops, "My Lords, cannot I take my subjects money "when I want it, without all this formality of parliament?" The bishop of "Durham readily answered, 'God forbid, Sir, but you should: you are the "'breath of our nostrils.' Whereupon the King turned and said to the bishop "of Winchester, "Well, my Lord, what say you?" 'Sir,' replied the bi-"shop, 'I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases.' The King answered, "" No put-offs, my Lord; answer me presently." 'Then, Sir,' said he, 'I "think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money; for he offers "it.' Mr. Waller said, the company was pleased with this answer, and the "wit of it seemed to affect the King; for, a certain lord coming in soon af-"ter, his Majesty cried out, "Oh, my lord, they say you lig with my lady," "'No, Sir,' says his Lordship in confusion; 'but I like her company, be-"'cause she has so much wit.' "Why then," says the King, "do you not "lig with my Lord of Winchester there?"

Waller's political and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears in his works, on "the Prince's Escape

at "St. Andero:" a piece which justifies the observation made by one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity like instinct, a style which perhaps will never be obsolete; and that, "were we to judge only by the wording, "we could not know what was wrote at twenty, and what at fourscore." His versification was, in his first essay, such as it appears in his last performance. By the perusal of Fairfax's translation of Tasso, to which, as* Dryden relates, he confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers, and by his own nicety of observation, he had already formed such a system of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedness of his age, but what was acquired by Denham was inherited by Waller.

The next poem, of which the subject seems to fix the time, is supposed by Mr. Fenton to be the Address to the Queen, which he considers as congratulating her arival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently mistaken; for the mention of the nations obligations to her frequent pregnancy, proves that it was written when she had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham occasioned; the steadiness with which the King received the news in the chapel, deserved indeed to be rescued from oblivion.

Neither of these pieces that seem to carry their own dates, could have been the sudden effusion of fancy. In the verses on the Prince's escape, the prediction of his marriage with the princess of France must have been written after the event; in the other, the promises of the King's kindness to the descendants of Buckingham, which could not be properly praised till it had appeared by its effects, shew that time was taken for revision and improvement. It is not known that they were published till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.

Waller was not one of those idolators of praise who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer, by marrying Mrs Banks, a great heiress in the city, whom the interest of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having brought him a son, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer of Oxfordshire, she died in childbed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty, gay and wealthy, to please himself with another marriage.

Being too young to resist beauty, and probably too vain to think himself resistable, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiously, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sacharissa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *sugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a spiritless mildness, and dull good-nature, such as excites rather tenderness than esteem, and such as, though always treated with kindness, is *never honoured or admired.*

Yet

* Preface to his Fables. Dr. J.

Yet he describes Sacharissa as a sublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondness, whose chains he wishes, though in vain, to break, and whose presence is *wine* that *inflames to madness*.

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave wit no opportunity of boasting its influence; she was not to be subdued by the powers of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and drove him away to solace his disappointment with Amoret or Philis. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newberry in the king's cause; and, in her old age, meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him, when he would again write such verses upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," said he, "and as handsome as you were then."

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the rest of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known so little to his advantage, that they who read his character will not much condemn Sacharissa, that she did not desend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit.

The lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him to the scholars and statesmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praises. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray. Perhaps by traditions preserved in families more may be discovered.

From the verses written at Penshurst, it has been collected that he diverted his disappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales, think it not improbable that he visited the Bermudas; but it seems much more likely that he should amuse himself with forming an imaginary scene, than that so important an incident, as a visit to America, should have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Sallee; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be discovered.

When he had lost all hopes of Sacharissa, he looked round him for an easier conquest, and gained a lady of the family of Bresse, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been discovered that his wife was won by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that she brought him many children. He doubtless praised some whom he would have been afraid to marry; and perhaps married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There

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are charms made only for distant admiration. No spectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that she gave him five sons and eight daughters.

During the long interval of parliament, he is represented as living among those with whom it was most honourable to converse, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independence and liberty of speech and conduct which wealth ought always to produce. He was however considered as the kinsman of Hampden, and was therefore supposed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been mistaken. The King's demand of a supply produced one of those noisy speeches which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. "They," says he, "who think themselves already undone, can "never apprehend themselves in danger; and they who have nothing left "can never give freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praises of courtiers and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being sure at that time of a favourable audience. His topic is such as will always serve its purpose; an accusation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully* to *provide* for their *protection against Pulpit Law.*

It always gratifies curiosity to trace a sentiment. Waller has in this speech quoted Hooker in one passage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," says Waller, "ought to be the first thing in our "purpose and desires; but that which is first in dignity is not always to "precede in order of time; for well-being supposes a being; and the first "impediment which men naturally endeavour to remove, is the want of "those things without which they cannot subsist. God first assigned unto "Adam maintenance of life, and gave him a title to the rest of the crea-"tures before he appointed a law to observe."

"God first assigned Adam," says Hooker, "maintenance of life, and "then appointed him a law to observe.—True it is, that the kingdom of God "must be the first thing in our purpose and desires; but inasmuch as a "righteous life presupposeth life, inasmuch as to live virtuously it is im-"possible, except we live; therefore the first impediment which naturally "we endeavour to remove is penury, and want of things without which we "cannot live."

The speech is vehement; but the great position, that grievances ought to be redressed before supplies are granted, is agreeable enough to law and reason: nor was Waller, if his biographer may be credited, such an enemy to the King, as not to wish his distresses lightened; for he relates, "that "the King sent particularly to Waller, to second his demand of some sub-"*sidies to pay off* the army; and Sir Henry Vane objecting against first voting

"voting a supply, because the King would not accept unless it came up to "his proportion, Mr. Waller spoke earnestly to Sir Thomas Jermyn, comp- "troller of the household, to save his master from the effects of so bold a "falsity; 'for,' he said, 'I am but a country gentleman, and cannot pre- "tend to know the King's mind;' but Sir Thomas durst not contradict the "secretary; and his son, the Earl of St. Albans, afterwards told Mr. "Waller, that his father's cowardice ruined the King."

In the Long Parliament, which unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, Waller represented Agmondesham the third time; and was considered by the discontented party as a man sufficiently trusty and acrimonious to be employed in managing the prosecution of Judge Crawley, for his opinion in favour of ship-money; and his speech shews that he did not disappoint their expectations. He was probably the more ardent, as his uncle Hampden had been particularly engaged in the dispute, and by a sentence which seems generally to be thought unconstitutional, particularly injured.

He was not however a bigot to his party, nor adopted all their opinions. When the great question, whether Episcopacy ought to be abolished, was debated, he spoke against the innovation so coolly, so reasonably, and so firmly, that it is not without great injury to his name that his speech, which was as follows, has been hitherto omitted in his works:

* "There is no doubt but the sense of what this nation has suffered from "the present Bishops hath produced these complaints; and the apprehen- "sions men have of suffering the like, in time to come, make so many de- "sire the taking away of Episcopacy: but I conceive it is possible that we "may not, now, take a right measure of the minds of the people by their "petitions; for, when they subscribed them, the Bishops were armed with "a dangerous commission of making new canons, imposing new oaths, and "the like; but now we have disarmed them of that power. These petition- "ers lately did look upon Episcopacy as a beast armed with horns and claws; "but now that we have cut and pared them (and may, if we see cause, yet "reduce it into narrower bounds,) it may, perhaps, be more agreeable. "Howsoever, if they be still in a passion, it becomes us soberly to consider "the right use and antiquity thereof; and not to comply further with a "general desire, than may stand with a general good.

"We have already shewed, that Episcopacy and the evils thereof are min- "gled like water and oil; we have also, in part, severed them; but I believe "you will find, that our laws and the present government of the church are "mingled like wine and water; so inseparable, that the abrogation of "at least a hundred of our laws is desired in these petitions. I have often "heard a noble answer of the Lords, commended in this house, to a propo- "sition of like nature, but of less consequence; they gave no other reason "of their refusal but this, *Nolumus mutare Leges Angliæ*: it was the bishops "who

* This speech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the *Parliamentary History*. *Dr. J.*

" who so answered then; and it would become the dignity and wisdom of " this house to answer the people, now, with a *Nolumus mutare.*

" I see some are moved with a number of hands against the Bishops; " which, I confess, rather inclines me to their defence; for I look upon Epis- " copacy as a counterscarp, or out-work; which, if it be taken by this assault " of the people, and, withal, this mystery once revealed, *That we must deny* " *them nothing when they ask it thus in troops,* we may, in the next place, " have as hard a task to defend our property, as we have lately had to re- " cover it from the Prerogative. If, by multiplying hands and petitions, " they prevail for an equality in things ecclesiastical, the next demand per- " haps may be *Lex Agraria,* the like equality in things temporal.

" The Roman story tells us, That when the people began to flock about " the senate, and were more curious to direct and know what was done, " than to obey, that Commonwealth soon came to ruin: their *Legem ro-* " *gare* grew quickly to be a *Legem ferre:* and after, when their legions had " found that they could make a Dictator, they never suffered the senate to " have a voice any more in such election.

" If these great innovations proceed, I shall expect a flat and level in " learning too, as well as in church-preferments: *Honos alit Artes.* And " though it be true, that grave and pious men do study for learning-sake, " and embrace virtue for itself: yet it is true, that youth, which is the sea- " son when learning is gotten, is not without ambition: nor will ever take " pains to excel in any thing, when there is not some hope of excelling " others in reward and dignity.

" There are two reasons chiefly alleged against our church-government.

" First, Scripture, which, as some men think, points out another form.

" Second, The abuses of the present superiors.

" For Scripture, I will not dispute it in this place; but I am confident " that, whenever an equal division of lands and goods shall be desired, there " will be as many places in Scripture found out, which seem to favour that, " as there are now alleged against the prelacy or preferment in the church. " And, as for abuses, when you are now, in the Remonstrance told, what " this and that poor man hath suffered by the bishops, you may be presented " with a thousand instances of poor men that have received hard measure " from their landlords; and of worldly goods abused, to the injury of " others, and disadvantage of the owners.

" And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble motion is, That we may settle " men's minds herein; and, by a question, declare our resolution, *to reform,* " that is, *not to abolish Episcopacy.*"

It cannot but be wished that he, who could speak in this manner, had been able to act with spirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to set the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is said to have withdrawn from the house, and to have returned with the king's permission; and, when the king set up his standard, he sent him

"him a thousand broad-pieces. He continued, however, to sit in the rebellious conventicle; but "spoke," says Clarendon, "with great sharpness and "freedom, which, now there was no danger of being outvoted, was not "restrained; and therefore used as an argument against those who were "gone upon pretence that they were not suffered to deliver their opinion "freely in the house, which could not be believed, when all men knew what "liberty Mr. Waller took, and spoke every day with impunity against the "sense and proceedings of the house."

Waller, as he continued to sit, was one of the commissioners nominated by the parliament to treat with the King at Oxford; and when they were presented, the King said to him, "Though you are the last, you are not "the lowest nor the least in my favour." Whitlock, who, being another of the commissioners, was witness of this kindness, imputes it to the king's knowledge of the plot, in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged against the parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes, that this attempt to promote the royal cause arose from his sensibility of the king's tenderness. Whitlock says nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was sent with several others to add pomp to the commission, but was not one of those to whom the trust of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was soon afterwards discovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the same time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, conversing with great confidence, told both their own secrets and those of their friends; and, surveying the wide extent of their conversation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great disapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingness to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the King, whose fear concealed their loyalty; and many desired peace, though they durst not oppose the clamour for war; and they imagined that if those who had these good intentions could be informed of their own strength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of sedition, by refusing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the support of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others; so that, if any should be suspected or seized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the design, and, Clarendon imagines, incidentally mingled, as he was a soldier, some martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main design being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpose there was to be appointed one in every district, to distinguish the friends of the king, the adherents to the parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded

does not appear; the result of their enquiry, as Pym declared*, was, that within the walls, for one that was for the Royalists, there were three against them; but that without the walls, for one that was against them, there were five for them. Whether this was said from knowledge or guess, was perhaps never enquired.

It is the opinion of Clarendon, that in Waller's plan no violence or sanguinary resistance was comprised; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by public declarations, and to weaken their powers by an opposition to new supplies. This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but such was the acrimony of the commons, that no method of obstructing them was safe.

About this time another design was formed by Sir Nicholas Crispe, a man of loyalty that deserves perpetual remembrance; when he was a merchant in the city; he gave and procured the king, in his exigences, an hundred thousand pounds; and, when he was driven from the Exchange, raised a regiment, and commanded it.

Sir Nicholas flattered himself with an opinion, that some provocation would so much exasperate, or some opportunity so much encourage, the King's friends in the city, that they would break out in open resistance, and then would want only a lawful standard, and an authorised commander; and extorted from the King, whose judgment too frequently yielded to importunity, a commission of array, directed to such as he thought proper to nominate, which was sent to London by the Lady Aubigney. She knew not what she carried, but was to deliver it on the communication of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commission could be only intended to lie ready till the time should require it. To have attempted to raise any forces, would have been certain destruction; it could be of use only when the forces should appear. This was, however, an act preparatory to martial hostility. Crispe would undoubtedly have put an end to the session of parliament, had his strength been equal to his zeal; and out of the design of Crispe, which involved very little danger, and that of Waller, which was an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid and dreadful plot.

The discovery of Waller's design is variously related. In "Clarendon's History" it is told, that a servant of Tomkyns, lurking behind the hangings when his master was in conference with Waller, heard enough to qualify him for an informer, and carried his intelligence to Pym. A manuscript, quoted in the "Life of Waller," relates, that "he was betrayed by his "sister Price, and her Presbyterian chaplain Mr. Goode, who stole some "of his papers; and if he had not strangely dreamed the night before, that "his sister had betrayed him, and thereupon burnt the rest of his papers by "the fire that was in his chimney, he had certainly lost his life by it." The question cannot be decided. It is not unreasonable to believe that the men *in power, receiving* intelligence from the sister, would employ the servant of

* Parliamentary History, Vol. II. Dr. J.

of Tomkyns to listen at the conference, that they might avoid an act so offensive as that of destroying the brother by the sister's testimony.

The plot was published in the most terrifick manner.

On the 31st of May (1643), at a solemn fast, when they were listening to the sermon, a messenger entered the church, and communicated his errand to Pym, who whispered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the rest in solicitude and amazement. They immediately sent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had been intercepted, from which it appeared that the parliament and the city were soon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themselves, beyond some general and indistinct notices. "But Waller," says Clarendon, "was so confounded with "fear, that he confessed whatever he had heard, said, thought, or seen; "all that he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of others, without "concealing any person, of what degree or quality soever, or any discourse "which he had ever upon any occasion entertained with them; what such "and such ladies of great honour, to whom, upon the credit of his wit and "great reputation, he had been admitted, had spoke to him in their cham-"bers upon the proceedings in the Houses, and how they had encouraged "him to oppose them; what correspondence and intercourse they had with "some Ministers of State at Oxford, and how they had conveyed all intel-"ligence thither." He accused the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the transaction; and testified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himself disposed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confessed much, which they could never have discovered, and perhaps somewhat which they would wish to have been suppressed; for it is inconvenient, in the conflict of factions, to have that disaffection known which cannot safely be punished

Tomkyns was seized on the same night with Waller, and appears likewise to have partaken of his cowardice; for he gave notice of Crispe's commission of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was discovered. Tomkyns had been sent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigney, and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confesses them to have had, the original copy.

It can raise no wonder that they formed one plot out of these two designs, however remote from each other, when they saw the same agent employed in both, and found the commission of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the most. They sent Pym among the citizens, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy escape; and inform them, that the design was "to seize the Lord "Mayor and all the Committee of Militia, and would not spare one of

"them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either house, by which he declared his detestation of all conspiracies against the parliament, and his resolution to detect and oppose them. They then appointed a day of thanksgiving for this wonderful delivery; which shut out, says Clarendon, all doubts whether there had been such a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the custody of the mayor, and the other of the sheriff; but their lands and goods were not seized.

Waller was still to immerse himself deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge; and there was no evidence against them but the confession of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to question the veracity. With these doubts he was so much terrified, that he endeavoured to persuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition. "But for me," says he, "you had never known any thing of this business, which was prepared "for another; and therefore I cannot imagine why you should hide it so "far as to contract your own ruin by concealing it, and persisting unrea-"sonably to hide that truth, which, without you, already is, and will every "day be made more manifest. Can you imagine yourself bound in honour "to keep that secret, which is already revealed by another; or possible it "should still be a secret, which is known to one of the other sex?—If you "persist to be cruel to yourself for their sakes who deserve it not, it will "nevertheless be made appear, ere long, I fear, to your ruin. Surely, if "I had the happiness to wait on you, I could move you to compassionate "both yourself and me, who, desperate as my case is, am desirous to die "with the honour of being known to have declared the truth. You have "no reason to contend to hide what is already revealed—inconsiderately to "throw away yourself, for the interest of others, to whom you are less ob-"liged than you are aware of."

This persuasion seems to have had little effect. Portland sent (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to tell them, that he "is in custody, as he conceives, "without any charge; and that, by what Mr. Waller hath threatened him "with since he was imprisoned, he doth apprehend a very cruel, long, and "ruinous restraint:—He therefore prays, that he may not find the effects "of Mr. Waller's threats, by a long and close imprisonment; but may be "speedily brought to a legal trial, and then he is confident the vanity and "falsehood of those informations which have been given against him will "appear."

In consequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Portland and Waller to be confronted; when the one repeated his charge, and the other his denial. The examination of the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, usher of the house of Lords, deposed, that Mr. Waller having had a conference with the Lord Portland in an upper room, Lord Portland said, when he came down, "Do me the favour to tell my Lord Northumberland, that Mr. Waller "has

"has extremely pressed me to save my own life and his, by throwing the "blame upon the Lord Conway and the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reasons which he could urge with resistless efficacy in a personal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence, whether of persuasion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtless Lady Aubigney, who, upon this occasion, was committed to custody; but who, in reality, when she delivered the commission, knew not what it was.

The parliament then proceeded against the conspirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, said it was a *foolish business*; and indeed there seems to have been no hope that it should escape discovery; for though never more than three met at a time, yet a design so extensive must, by necessity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was, that he had commission to raise money for the King; but it appears not that the money was to be expended upon the advancement of either Crispe or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for prosecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway persisting to deny the charge, and no testimony but Waller's yet appearing against them, were, after a long imprisonment, admitted to bail. Hassel, the King's messenger, who carried the letter to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden escaped death, perhaps by the interest of his family; but was kept in prison to the end of his life. They whose names were inserted in the commission of array were not capitally punished, as it could not be proved that they had consented to their own nomination; but they were considered as malignants, and their estates were seized.

"Waller, though confessedly," says Clarendon, "the most guilty, with "incredible dissimulation affected such a remorse of conscience, that his "trial was put off, out of Christian compassion, till he might recover his "understanding." What use he made of this interval, with what liberality and success he distributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the House, he confessed and lamented, and submitted and implored, may be read in the History of the Rebellion (B. vii.) The speech, to which Clarendon ascribes the preservation of his *dear-bought life*, is inserted in his works. The great historian, however, seems to have been mistaken in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his supplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock, he was by expulsion from the House abandoned to the tribunal which he so much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Essex; but after a year's imprisonment, in which time resentment grew less acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thousand pounds, he was permitted to *recollect himself in another country*.

Of

Of his behaviour in this part of his life, it is not necessary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us not," says his last ingenious biographer, "condemn him with untempered severity, because he was not a prodigy which "the world hath seldom seen, because his character included not the poet, "the orator, and the hero."

For the place of his exile he chose France, and stayed some time at Roan, where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuensis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great splendor and hospitality; and from time to time amused himself with poetry, in which he sometimes speaks of the rebels, and their usurpation, in the natural language of an honest man.

At last it became necessary, for his support, to sell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he said, at last *to the rump-jewel*, he solicited from Cromwell permission to return, and obtained it by the interest of colonel Scroop, to whom his sister was married. Upon the remains of a fortune, which the danger of his life had very much diminished, he lived at Hall-barn, a house built by himself, very near to Beaconsfield, where his mother resided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cause, and, when Cromwell visited her, used to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and say he would not dispute with his aunt; but finding in time that she acted for the King, as well as talked, he made her a prisoner to her own daughter, in her own house. If he would do any thing, he could not do less.

Cromwell, now Protector, received Waller as his kinsman, to a familiar conversation. Waller, as he used to relate, found him sufficiently versed in ancient history; and when any of his enthusiastick friends came to advise or consult him, could sometimes overhear him discourse in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would say, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men in their own way:" and resumed the common style of conversation.

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous panegyrick, which has been always considered as the first of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiastic topicks is very judicious; for he considers Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is consequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with shades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which he obtained the supreme power is lightly treated and decently justified. It was certainly to be desired that the detestable band should be dissolved, which had destroyed the church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppression; yet Cromwell had not the right of dissolving them, for all that he had before done could be justified only by supposing them invested with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedness would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not those, who have long practised perfidy, grow faithless to each other.

In

In the poem on the war with Spain are some passages at least equal to the best parts of the panegyrick: and, in the conclusion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very desirous, as appears from his conversation, related by Whitlock, of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is supposed to have been with-held from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he should govern by the name of King, would have restrained his authority. When therefore a deputation was solemnly sent to invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refused it; but is said to have fainted in his coach, when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector seems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the same occasion; but they were young men, struggling into notice, and hoping for some favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to expect: he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to ask any thing from those who should succeed him.

Soon afterwards the Restauration supplied him with another subject: and he exerted his imagination, his elegance and his melody, with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not possible to read, without some contempt and indignation, poems of the same author, ascribing the highest degree of *power and piety* to Charles the First, then transferring the same *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell, now inviting Oliver to take the Crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his teſtimony as the effect of conviction or receive his praises as effusions of reverence; they could consider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependance.

Poets, indeed, profess fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue.

The Congratulation was considered as inferior in poetical merit to the Panegyrick; and it is reported, that, when the king told Waller of the disparity, he answered "Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth."

The Congratulation is indeed not inferior to the Panegyrick, either by decay of genius, or for want of diligence; but because Cromwell had done much, and Charles had done little. Cromwell wanted nothing to raise him to heroic excellence but virtue; and virtue his poet thought himself at liberty to supply. Charles had yet only the merit of struggling without success, and suffering without despair. A life of escapes and indigence could supply poetry with no splendid images.

In the first parliament summoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661). Waller sat for Hastings in Sussex, and served for different places in all the parliaments of that reign. In a time when fancy and gaiety were the most powerful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that Waller was forgotten. He passed his time in the company that was highest, both in rank

and

and wit, from which even his obstinate sobriety did not exclude him. Though he drank water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to heighten the mirth of Bacchanalian assemblies; and Mr. Saville said, "that no man in England should "keep him company without drinking but Ned Waller."

The praise given him by St. Evremond is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he could be known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an English pension, never condescended to understand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In the parliament, he was, says Burnet, "the delight of the house, and "though old, said the liveliest things of any among them." This, however, is said in his account of the year seventy-five, when Waller was only seventy. His name as a speaker occurs often in Grey's Collections; but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting sallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.

He was of such consideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew, says Burnet, a lively reflection from Waller the celebrated wit. "He said, the House of Commons had resolved that the "duke should not reign after the king's death; but the king, in opposition "to them, had resolved that he should reign even in his life." If there appear no extraordinary *liveliness* in this *remark*, yet its reception proves the speaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which the men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not suffer his reputation to die gradually away, which may easily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical distinction from time to time, as occasions were offered, either by public events or private incidents; and, contenting himself with the influence of his muse, or loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magistracy.

He was not, however, without some attention to his fortune; for he asked from the King (in 1665) the provostship of Eaton College, and obtained it; but Clarendon refused to put the seal to the grant, alleging that it could be held only by a clergyman. It is known that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himself for it by Deacon's orders.

To this opposition, the *Biographia* imputes the violence and acrimony with which Waller joined Buckingham's faction in the prosecution of Clarendon. The motive was illiberal and dishonest, and shewed that more than sixty years had not been able to teach him morality. His accusation is such as conscience can hardly be supposed to dictate without the help of malice. "We were to be governed by janizaries instead of parliaments, and are "in danger from a worse plot than that of the fifth of November: then if "the lords and commons had been destroyed, there had been a succession; "but here both had been destroyed for ever." This is the language of a man who is glad of an opportunity to rail, and ready to sacrifice truth to *interest* at one time and to anger at another.

*A year after the* Chancellor's banishment, another vacancy gave him encouragement

couragement for another petition which the King referred to the council, who, after hearing the question argued by lawyers for three days, determined that the office could be held only by a clergyman, according to the act of uniformity, since the provosts had always received institution, as for a parsonage, from the bishops of Lincoln. The King then said, he could not break the Law which he had made: and Dr. Zachary Cradock, famous for a single sermon, at most for two sermons, was chosen by the Fellows.

That he asked any thing more is not known; it is certain that he obtained nothing, though he continued obsequious to the court through the rest of Charles's reign.

At the accession of king James (in 1685) he was chosen for parliament, being then fourscore, at Saltash in Cornwall, and wrote a *Presage of the Downfall of the Turkish Empire*, which he presented to the King on his birth-day. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Tasso, he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having soon after begun what he thought a holy war at home, made haste to put all molestation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindness and familiarity, of which instances are given by the writer of his life. One day, taking him into the closet, the King asked him how he liked one of the pictures? "My eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The King said, it was the Princess of "Orange. "She is," said Waller, "like the greatest woman in the world." The King asked who was that? and was answered, Queen Elizabeth. "I "wonder," said the King, "you should think so; but I must confess she "had a wise council." "And, Sir" said Waller, "did you ever know a "fool choose a wise one?" Such is the story, which I once heard of some "other man. Pointed axioms, and acute replies, fly loose about the world, and are assigned successively to those whom it may be the fashion to celebrate.

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch, a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him, that "the "King wondered he could think of marrying his daughter to a falling "church." "The King," says Waller, "does me great honour, in taking "notice of my domestic affairs; but I have lived long enough to observe "that this falling church has got a trick of rising again."

He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct; and said, that "he "would be left like a whale upon the strand." Whether he was privy to any transactions which ended in the Revolution, is not known. His heir joined the prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws of nature seldom suffer life to be extended, otherwise than by a future state, he seems to have turned his mind upon preparations for the decisive hour, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. It is pleasing to discover that his piety was without weakness; that his intellectual powers continued vigorous; and that the lines *which he composed when he, for age, could neither read nor write, are not inferior to the effusions* of his youth.

Towards the decline of life, he bought a small house, with a little land, at Colshill; and said, "he should be glad to die, like the stag, where he was roused." This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs grow tumid: he went to Windsor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requested him, as both a friend and physician, to tell him, *what that swelling meant.* "Sir," answered Scarborough, "your blood will run no longer." Waller repeated some lines of Virgil, and went home to die.

As the disease increased upon him, he composed himself for his departure; and calling upon Dr. Birch to give him the holy sacrament, he desired his children to take it with him, and made an earnest declaration of his faith in Christianity. It now appeared what part of his conversation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being present when the duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he said to him, "My Lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and have, I be-"lieve, heard more arguments for atheism than ever your grace did; but "I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them; and so, I hope, "your grace will."

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his son's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inscription, and which I hope is now rescued from dilapidation.

He left several children by his second wife; of whom, his daughter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldest son, was disinherited, and sent to New Jersey, as wanting common understanding. Edmund, the second son, inherited the estate, and represented Agmondesham in parliament, but at last turned Quaker. William the third son, was a merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commissioners for the Union. There is said to have been a fifth, of whom no account has descended.

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual, has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can presume to emulate. It is therefore inserted here, with such remarks as others have supplied; after which nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

"Edmund Waller," says Clarendon, "was born to a very fair estate "by the parsimony, or frugality, of a wise father and mother: and he "thought it so commendable an advantage, that he resolved to improve it "with his utmost care, upon which in his nature he was too much intent; "and, in order to that, he was so much reserved and retired, that he was "scarce ever heard of, till by his address and dexterity he had gotten a very "rich wife in the city, against all the recommendation and countenance and "authority of the Court, which was thoroughly engaged on the behalf of "Mr. Crofts; and which used to be successful in that age, against any "opposition. He had the good fortune to have an alliance and friendship "*with Dr. Morley,* who had assisted and instructed him in the reading

"many

"many good books, to which his natural parts and promptitude inclined "him, especially the poets; and at the age when other men used to give "over writing verses (for he was near thirty years when he first engaged "himself in that exercise, at least, that he was known to do so), he sur- "prised the town with two or three pieces of that kind; as if a tenth Muse had been newly born to cherish drooping poetry. The Doctor at that time "brought him into that company, which was most celebrated for good con- "versation; where he was received and esteemed, with great applause and "respect. He was a very pleasant discourser, in earnest and in jest, and "therefore very grateful to all kind of company, where he was not the less "esteemed for being very rich.

"He had been even nursed in parliaments, where he sat when he was "very young; and so, when they were resumed again (after a long inter- "mission), he appeared in those assemblies with great advantage; having "a graceful way of speaking, and by thinking much on several argu- "ments (which his temper and complexion, that had much of melan- "cholic, inclined him to), he seemed often to speak upon the sudden, when "the occasion had only administered the opportunity of saying what he had "thoroughly considered, which gave a great lustre to all he said; which "yet was rather of delight than weight. There needs no more be said to "extol the excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness of his conver- "sation, than that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world of very "great faults; that is, so to cover them, that they were not taken notice "of to his reproach; viz. a narrowness in his nature to the lowest degree; "an abjectness and want of courage to support him in any virtuous under- "taking; an insinuation and servile flattery to the height, the vainest and "most imperious nature could be contented with; that it preserved and "won his life from those who most resolved to take it, and in an occasion "in which he ought to have been ambitious to have lost it; and then pre- "served him again, from the reproach, and contempt that was due to him, "for so preserving it, and for vindicating it at such a price; that it had "power to reconcile him to those, whom he had most offended and pro- "voked; and continued to his age with that rare felicity, that his company "was acceptable, where his spirit was odious; and he was at least pitied, "where he was most detested."

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may not be improper to make some remarks.

"He was very little known till he had obtained a rich wife in the city."

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three and twenty; an age before which few men are conspicuous much to their advantage. He was known, however, in parliament and at court; and, if he spent part of his time in privacy, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as well as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his retirement is the more probable, *because he has evidently* mistaken the commencement of his

poetry, which he supposes him not to have attempted before thirty. As his first pieces were perhaps not printed, the succession of his compositions was not known; and Clarendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very studious of poetry, did not rectify his first opinion by consulting Waller's book.

Clarendon observes, that he was introduced to the wits of the age by Dr. Morley; but the writer of his Life relates that he was already among them, when, hearing a noise in the street, and enquiring the cause, they found a son of Ben Johnson under an arrest. This was Morley, whom Waller set free at the expence of one hundred pounds, took him into the country as a director of his studies, and then procured him admission into the company of the friends of literature. Of this fact, Clarendon had a nearer knowledge than the biographer, and is therefore more to be credited.

The account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is seconded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the delight of the house," adds, that "he "was only concerned to say that, which should make him be applauded, "he never laid the business of the House to heart, being a vain and empty "though a witty man."

Of his insinuation and flattery it is not unreasonable to believe that the truth is told. Ascham, in his elegant description of those whom in modern language we term Wits, says, that they are *open flatterers and privy mockers*. Waller shewed a little of both, when, upon sight of the Duchess of Newcastle's verses on the death of a Stag, he declared that he would give all his own compositions to have written them; and, being charged with the exorbitance of his adulation, answered, "that nothing was too much to be "given, that a lady might be saved from the disgrace of such a vile performance." This however was no very mischievous or very unusual deviation from truth: had his hypocrisy been confined to such transactions, he might have been forgiven, though not praised; for who forbears to flatter an author or a lady.

Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakness of his resolution, he experienced the natural effect, by losing the esteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the safety of Hampden's son.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whose sake he prosecuted Crawley with great bitterness; and the invective which he pronounced on that occasion was so popular, that twenty thousand copies are said by his biographer to have been sold in one day.

It is confessed that his faults still left him many friends, at least many companions. His convivial power of pleasing is universally acknowledged; but those who conversed with him intimately, found him not only passionate, especially in his old age, but resentful; so that the interposition of *friends was sometimes* necessary.

His

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurst in the translation of Corneille's Pompey; and is said to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the Rehearsal.

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little less than criminal, was either not constant or not successful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thousand five hundred pounds a year in the time of James the First, and augmented it at least by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once possessed.

Of this diminution, part was the consequence of the gifts which he was forced to scatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot; and if his estate, as is related in his Life, was sequestered, he had probably contracted debts when he lived in exile; for we are told, that at Paris he lived in splendor, and was the only Englishman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to sell a thousand a year; of the waste of the rest there is no account, except that he is confessed by his biographer to have been a bad œconomist. He seems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his first years, and a squanderer in his last.

Of his course of studies, or choice of books, nothing is more known than that he professed himself unable to read Chapman's translation of Homer without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration, that "he would blot from his works any line that did not "contain some motive to virtue."

THE characters, by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings, are spriteliness and dignity; in his smaller pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger to be great. Of his airy and light productions, the chief source is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence, which has descended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occasional, and his addresses personal, he was not so liberally supplied with grand as with soft images; for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, restrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the slightest matter. He has, therefore, in his whole volume, nothing burlesque, and seldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He seems always to do his best: though his subjects are often unworthy of his care. It is not easy to think without some contempt on an author, who is growing illustrious in his own opinion by verses, at one time, "To a Lady, who can do any thing, but sleep, when she pleases." At another, "To a Lady, who can sleep, when she pleases." Now, "To a "Lady, on her passing through a crowd of people." Then, "On a braid "of divers colours woven by four Ladies:" "On a tree cut in paper:" or,

"To

" To a Lady, from whom he received the copy of verses on the paper-tree, " which, for many years, had been missing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the *Dove* of Anacreon, and *Sparrow* of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a performance, which owes nothing to the subject. But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretel fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are some, which their excellency ought to secure from oblivion; as, *To Amoret*, comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sacharissa*; and the verses *On Love*, that begin, *Anger in hasty words or blows.*

In others he is not equally successful; sometimes his thoughts are deficient, and sometimes his expression.

The numbers are not always musical; as,

Fair Venus, in thy soft arms
The god of rage confine;
For thy whispers are the charms
Which only can divert his fierce design.
What though he frown, and to tumult do incline;
Thou the flame
Kindled in his breast canst tame
With that snow which unmelted lies on thine.

He seldom indeed fetches an amorous sentiment from the depths of science; his thoughts are for the most part easily understood, and his images such as the superficies of nature readily supplies; he has a just claim to popularity, because he writes to common degrees of knowledge, and is free at least from philosophical pedantry, unless perhaps the end of a song *to the Sun* may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added the simile of the *Palm* in the verses *on her passing through a crowd*; and a line in a more serious poem on the *Restauration*, about vipers and treacle, which can only be understood by those who happen to know the composition of the *Theriaca.*

His thoughts are sometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural;

——The plants admire,
No less than those of old did Orpheus' lyre;
If she sit down, with tops all tow'rds her bow'd;
They round about her into arbours crowd:
Or if she walks, in even ranks they stand,
Like some wall marshal'd and obsequious band.

In another place;

While in the park I sing, the listening deer
Attend my passion, and forget to fear:
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same,
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,
With loud complaints they answer me in showers.
To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!

On

On the head of a Stag:

O fertile head! which every year
Could such a crop of wonder bear!
The teeming earth did never bring
So soon, so hard, so hûge a thing:
Which might it never have been cast,
Each year's growth added to the last,
These lofty branches had supply'd
The Earth's bold son's prodigious pride:
Heaven with these engines had been scal'd,
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd.

Sometimes having succeeded in the first part, he makes a feeble conclusion. In the song of "Sacharissa's and Amoret's Friendship," the two last stanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the highest degree delicate.

Then shall my love this doubt displace,
And gain such trust that I may come
And banquet sometimes on thy face,
But make my constant meals at home.

Some applications may be thought too remote and unconsequential: as in the verses on the *Lady dancing*.

The sun in figures such as these,
Joys with the moon to play:
To the sweet strains they advance,
Which do result from their own spheres:
As this nymph's dance
Moves with the numbers which she hears.

Sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a distich, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and almost evanescent.

Chloris! since first our calm of peace
Was frighted hence, this good we find,
Your favours with your fears increase,
And growing mischiefs make you kind.
So the fair tree, which still preserves
Her fruit, and state, while no wind blows,
In storms from that uprightness swerves;
And the glad earth about her strows
With treasure from her yielding boughs.

His images are not always distinct; as, in the following passage, he confounds *Love* as a person with *love* as a passion:

Some other nymphs, with colours faint,
And pencil slow may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time destroy;
She has a stamp, and prints the Boy:
Can, with a single look, inflame
The coldest breast, the rudest tame.

His sallies of casual flattery are sometimes elegant and happy, as that *in verses for the Silver Pen*; and sometimes empty and trifling, as that upon the

*the Card torn by the Queen.* There are a few lines *written in the Dutchess'* *Tasso*, which he is said by Fenton to have kept a summer under correction It happened to Waller, as to others, that his success was not always in proportion to his labour.

Of these petty compositions, neither the beauties nor the faults deserv much attention. The amorous verses have this to recommend them, tha they are less hyperbolical than those of some other poets. Waller is no always at the last gasp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a smile There is, however, too much love, and too many trifles. Little things ar made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is represented as exertin its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human pas sions, and the variety of human wants. Such books, therefore, may b considered as shewing the world under a false appearance, and, so far a they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as misleading expec tation, and misguiding practice.

Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is pane gyrical; for of praise he was very lavish, as is observed by his imitator, Lor Lansdowne.

> No satyr stalks within the hallow'd ground,
> But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound;
> Glory and arms and love are all the sound.

In the first poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coast of Spain, ther is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the las paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculously mean, and in part ridicu lously tumid. The poem, however, is such as may be justly praised, with out much allowance for the state of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of* Buck ingham, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the first, used the pagan deities with great propriety:

> 'Twas want of such a precedent as this
> Made the old heathens frame their gods amiss.

In the poem on the Navy, those lines are very noble, which suppose th King's power secure against a second Deluge; so noble, that it were almo criminal to remark the mistake of *centre* for *surface*, or to say that the em pire of the sea would be worth little if it were not that the waters termi nate in land.

The poem upon Sallee has forcible sentiments; but the conclusion feeble. That on the Repairs of St. Paul's has something vulgar and obvious such as the mention of Amphion; and something violent and harsh, as

> So all our minds with his conspire to grace
> The Gentiles' great apostle, and deface
> Those state-obscuring sheds, that like a chain
> Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:

Whi

Which the glad saint shakes off at his command,
As once the viper from his sacred hand.
So joys the aged oak, when we divide
The creeping ivy from his injur'd side.

Of the two last couplets, the first is extravagant, and the second mean.

His praise of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that she "saves lovers, by cutting off hope; as gangrenes are cured by lopping "the limb," presents nothing to the mind but disgust and horror.

Of the *Battle of the Summer Islands*, it seems not easy to say whether it is intended to raise terror or merriment. The beginning is too splendid for jest, and the conclusion too light for seriousness. The versification is studied, the scenes are diligently displayed, and the images artfully amplified; but as it ends neither in joy nor sorrow, it will scarcely be read a second time.

The *Panegyrick* upon Cromwell has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praise, which however cannot be said to have been unjustly lavished; for such a series of verses had rarely appeared before in the English language. Of the lines some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical. There is now and then a feeble verse, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero.

The poem of *The War with Spain* begins with lines more vigorous and striking than Waller is accustomed to produce. The succeeding parts are variegated with better passages and worse. There is something too far-fetched in the comparison of the Spaniards drawing the English on, by saluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to lambs awakening the lion by bleating*. The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ship, would have moved more, had the Poet not made him die like the Phœnix, because he had spices about him, nor expressed their affection and their end by a conceit at once false and vulgar:

Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,
And now together are to ashes turn'd.

The verses to Charles, on his Return, were doubtless intended to counterbalance the panegyrick on Cromwell. If it has been thought inferior to that with which it is naturally compared, the cause of its deficience has been already remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not necessary to examine singly. They must be supposed to have faults and beauties of the same kind with the rest. The Sacred Poems, however, deserve particular regard; they were the work of Waller's declining life, of those hours in which he looked upon the fame and the folly of the time past with the sentiments which his great predecessor Petrarch bequeathed to posterity, upon his review of that love and poetry which have given him immortality.

His double rhymes, in heroick verse, have been censured by Mrs. Philips, who was his rival in the translation of Corneille's Pompey; and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He sometimes uses the obsolete termination of verbs, as *waxeth*, *affecteth*; and sometimes retains the final syllable of the preterite, as *amazed*, *supposed*, of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is sparing; but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The general character of his poetry is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely sublime. He seems to have had a mind neither much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are such as a liberal conversation and large acquaintance with life would easily supply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty, which they are now often supposed to want by those who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them first. This treatment is unjust. Let not the original author lose by his imitators.

Praise, however, should be due before it is given. The author of Waller's life ascribes to him the first practice, of what Erythræus and some late critics call *Alliteration*, of using in the same verse many words beginning with the same letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was so frequent among early writers, that Gascoigne, a writer of the sixteenth century, warns the young poet against affecting it; Shakspeare, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is supposed to ridicule it; and in another play the sonnet of Holofernes fully displays it.

He borrows too many of his sentiments and illustrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities, which they introduced so frequently, were considered as realities, so far as to be received by the imagination, whatever sober reason might even then determine. But of these images time has tarnished the splendor. A fiction, not only detected but despised, can never afford a solid basis to any position, though sometimes it may furnish a transient allusion, or slight illustration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Tasso said, with equal spirit and justice of himself and Guarini, when, having perused the *Pastor Fido*, he cried out, "If he "had not read *Aminta*, he had not excelled it."

AS Waller professed himself to have learned the art of versification from Fairfax, it has been thought proper to subjoin a specimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's translation, will perhaps not be soon reprinted.

By

y knowing the state in which Mr. Waller found our poetry, the reader ay judge how much he improved it.

1

Erminia's steed (this while) his mistresse bore
Through forrests thicke among the shadie treene,
Her feeble hand the bridle raines forlore,
Half in a swoune she was for feare I weene:
But her flit courser spared nere the more,
To beare her through the desart woods vneene
Of her strong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,
And still pursu'd, but still pursu'd in vaine.

2

Like as the wearie bounds at last retire;
Windlesse, displeased, from the fruitlesse chace,
When the slie beast Tapisht in bush and brire,
No art nor paines can rowse out of his place:
The Christian knights so full of shame and ire
Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace!
Yet still the fearfull Dame fled, swift as winde,
Nor euer staid, nor euer lookt behinde.

3

Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, she driued,
Withouten comfort, companie, or guide,
Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,
She heard and saw her greefes, but nought beside.
But when the sunne his burning chariot diued
In Thetis wauve, and wearie teame vntide,
On Iordan's sandie banks her course she staid,
At last, there downe she light, and downe she laid,

4

Her teares, her drinke; her food, her sorrowings,
This was her diet that vnhappie night:
But sleepe (that sweet repose and quiet brings)
To ease the greefes of discontented wight,
Spread foorth his tender, soft, and nimble wings,
In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright;
And loue, his mother, and the graces kept
Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie slept.

5

The birds awakte her with their morning song,
Their warbling musicke pearst her tender eare,
The murmuring brookes and whistling windes among
The rattling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare;
Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along
Of swaines and shepherd groomes, that dwellings weare;
And that sweet noise, birds, winds, and waters sent,
Prouokte again the virgin to lament.

6

Her plaints were interrupted with a sound,
That seem'd from thickest bushes to proceed,

Some

Some iollie shepherd sung a lustie round,
And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;
Thither she went, an old man there she found,
(At whose right hand his little flock did feed)
Sat making baskets, his three sonnes among,
That learn'd their father's art, and learn'd his song.

7

Beholding one in shining armes appeare
The seelie man and his were sore dismaid;
But sweet Erminia comforted their feare,
Her ventall vp, her visage open laid,
You happie folke, of heau'n belou'd deare,
Work on (quoth she) upon your harmlesse traid.
These dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring
To your sweet toile, nor those sweet tunes you sing.

8

But father, since this land, these townes and towres,
Destroied are with sword, with fire and spoile,
How may it be unhurt, that yov and yours
In safetie thus, applie your harmlesse toile?
My sonne (quoth he) this pore estate of ours
Is euer safe from storm of warlike broile;
This wildernesse doth vs in safetie keepe,
No thundring drum, no trumpet breakes our sleepe.

9

Haply iust heau'ns defence and shield of right,
Doth loue the innocence of simple swains,
The thunderbolts on highest mountains light,
And seld or neuer strike the lower plaines:
So kings haue cause to feare *Bellonaes* might,
Not they whose sweat and toile their dinner gaines,
Nor ever greedie soldier was entised
By pouertie, neglected and despised.

10

O pouertie, chefe of the heau'nly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne!
No wish for honour, thirst of others good,
Can moue my hart, contented with mine owne:
We quench our thirst with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poison should therein be throwne;
These little flocks of sheepe and tender goates
Giue milke for food, and wool to make us coates.

11

We little wish, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed;
These are my sonnes, their care preserues from stealth
Their father's flocks, nor servants moe I need:
Amid these groues I walke oft for my health,
And to the fishes, birds, and beastes giue heed,

How they are fed, in forrest, spring and lake,
And their contentment for ensample take.

12

Time was (for each one hath his doting time,
These siluer locks were golden tresses than)
That countrie life I hated as a crime,
And from the forrests sweet contentment ran,
To Memphis stately pallace would I clime,
And there became the mighty Caliphes man,
And though I but a simple gardner weare,
Yet could I mark abuses, see and heare.

13

Entised on with hope of future gaine,
I suffred long what did my soule displease;
But when my youth was spent, my hope was vaine,
I felt my native strength at last decrease;
I gan my loss of lustie yeeres complaine,
And wisht I had enjoy'd the countries peace;
I bod the court farewell, and with content,
My later age here have I quiet spent.

14

While thus he spake, Erminia husht and still
His wise discourses heard, with great attention,
His speeches graue those idle fancies kill,
Which in her troubled soule bred such dissention.
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within those woods to dwell was her intention,
Till fortune should occasion new afford,
To turne her home to her desired Lord.

15

She said therefore, O shepherd fortunate!
That troubles some didst whilom feele and proue,
Yet liuest now in this contented state,
Let my mishap thy thoughts to pitye moue,
To entertaine me as a willing mate
In shepherds life, which I admire and loue;
Within these pleasant groues perchance my hart,
Of her discomforts may vnload some part.

16

If gold or wealth of most esteemed deare,
If iewels rich, thou diddest hold in prise,
Such store thereof, such plentie haue I seen,
As to a greedie minde might well suffice:
With that downe trickled many a siluer teare,
Two christall streames fell from her watrie eyes;
Part of her sad misfortunes than she told,
And wept, and with her wept that shepherd old.

17

With speeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare
Towards his cottage gently home to guide;
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,
Yet welcomde her, and plast her by her side.
The Princesse dond a poore pastorales geare,
A kerchiefe course vpon her head she tide;
But yet her gestures and her lookes (I gesse)
Were such, as ill beseem'd a shepherdesse.

18

Not those rude garments could obscure, and hide,
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,
Nor was her princely ofspring damnifide,
Or ought disparag'de, by those labours base;
Her little flocks to pasture would she guide,
And milke her goates, and in their folds them place,
Both cheese and butter could she make, and frame
Her selfe to please the shepherd and his dame.

# POMFRET.

Mr. JOHN POMFRET nothing is known but from a slight and
onfused account prefixed to his poems by a nameless friend; who re-
hat he was the son of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bed-
re; that he was bred at Cambridge*; entered into orders, and was
of Malden in Bedfordshire, and might have risen in the Church; but
ien he applied to Dr. Compton, bishop of London, for institution to
g of considerable value, to which he had been presented, he found a
some obstruction raised by a malicious interpretation of some passage
*Choice*; from which it was inferred, that he considered happiness as
ikely to be found in the company of a mistress than of a wife.
s reproach was easily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as
ther men who plan schemes of life; he had departed from his pur-
and was then married.

malice of his enemies had however a very fatal consequence: the
onstrained his attendance in London, where he caught the small-pox,
ed 1703, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

published his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of
ass of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own
ment.

*Choice* exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal
nmon expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity,
it exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our
ge has been oftener perused than Pomfret's *Choice*.

his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth me-
afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous or en-
d with intricate sentiment. He pleases many, and he who pleases many
have some species of merit.



* was of Queen's College there, and, by the University register, appears to have taken his
r's degree in 1684, and his Master's in 1698. *Ed.*

# DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorset the character has been drawn so largely and sc gantly by Prior, to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing c added by a casual hand; and as its author is so generally read, it woul useless officiousness to transcribe it.

CHARLES SACKVILLE was born January 24, 1637. Having educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a before the Restoration. He was chosen into the first parliament that called, for East Grinstead in Sussex, and soon became a favourite of Ch the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eag the riotous and licentious pleasures which young men of high rank, aspired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themselves intitled to dulge.

One of these frolicks has, by the industry of Wood, come down to terity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurst, with Sir Charles Se and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-street by Cov garden, and, going into the balcony, exposed themselves to the popu in very indecent postures. At last as they grew warmer, Sedley stood f naked, and harangued the populace in such profane language, that the pu indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the door, a being repulsed, drove in the performers with stones, and broke the wind of the house.

For this misdemeanor they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five h dred pounds: what was the sentence of the others is not known. Sec employed Killigrew and another to procure a remission from the king; (mark the friendship of the dissolute!) they begged the fine for themsel and exacted it to the last groat.

In 1665, Lord Buckhurst attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in Dutch war; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch sh

w

were taken, fourteen others were destroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beside him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is said to have composed the celebrated song, *To all you Ladies now at land*, with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit. Seldom any splendid story is wholly true. I have heard from the late earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurst had been a week employed upon it; and only retouched or finished it on the memorable evening. But even this, whatever it may subtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He was soon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and sent on short embassies to France.

In 1674, the estate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorset, and inherited the estate of his family.

In 1684, having buried his first wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and understanding.

He received some favourable notice from King James; but soon found it necessary to oppose the violence of his innovations, and with some other Lords appeared in Westminster-hall to countenance the bishops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day less supportable, he found it necessary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of those Lords who sat every day in council to preserve the public peace, after the king's departure; and, what is not the most illustrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the princess Anna to Nottingham with a guard, such as might alarm the populace, as they passed, with false apprehensions of her danger. Whatever end may be designed, there is always something despicable in a trick.

He became, as may be easily supposed, a favourite of King William, who the day after his accession, made him lord chamberlain of the house-hold, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among those that were tossed with the King in an open boat sixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather, on the coast of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on January 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whose elegance and judgment were universally confessed, and whose bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rochester bore ample testimony in this remark; *I know not how it is, but* Lord Buckhurst *may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*

If such a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that his works were praised. Dryden, whom, if Prior tells truth, he distinguished by his beneficence, and who lavished his blandishments on those who are not known to have so well

deserved

deserved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country superior t
those of antiquity, says, *I would instance your Lordship in satire, and Sha
speare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all t
satires were little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was
song of eleven stanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggered praise falls on the encomiast, n
upon the author; whose performances are, what they pretend to be, the effi
sions of a man of wit; gay, vigorous, and airy. His verses to Howard she
great fertility of mind, and his *Dorinda* has been imitated by Pope.

STEPNEY

# STEPNEY.

EORGE STEPNEY, descended from the Stepneys of Pendigrast in Pembrokeshire, was born at Westminster in 1663. Of his father's con- n or fortune we have no account. Having received the first part of his ation at Westminster, where he passed six years in the College, he went at teen to Cambridge*, where he continued a friendship begun at school with Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, are said to have been invited into publick life by the duke of Dorset. is qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, so that ime seems to have been spent in negociations. In 1692 he was sent envoy e Elector of Brandenburgh; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to Elector of Saxony; in 1696 to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and Congress at Francfort; in 1698 a second time to Brandenburgh; in 1699 e King of Poland; in 1701 again to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the s General. In 1697 he was made one of the commissioners of trade. life was busy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is bured in West- ter Abbey, with this epitaph, which *Jacob* transcribed:

H. S. E.
GEORGIUS STEPNEUS, Armiger,
Vir
Ob Ingenii acumen,
Literarum Scientiam,
Morum Suavitatem,
Rerum Usum,
Virorum Amplissimorum Consuetudinem
Linguæ, Styli, ac Vitæ Elegantiam,
Præclara Officia cum Britanniæ tum Europæ præstita,

Sua

* He was entered of Trinity College, and took his Master's degree in 1689. H.

Sua ætate multum celebratus,
Apud posteros semper celebrandus;
Plurimas Legationes obiit
Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,
Ut Augustissimorum Principum
Gulielmi & Annæ
Spem in illo repositam
Nunquam fefellerit,
Haud raro superaverit.
Post longum honorum Cursum
Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,
Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ satis vixerat,
Animam ad altiora aspirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand,

G. S.
Ex Equestri Familia Stepneiorum,
De Pendegrast, in Comitatu
Pembrochiensi oriendus,
Westmonasterii natus est, A. D. 1663.
Electus in Collegium
Sancti Petri Westmonast. A. D. 1676.
Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.
Consiliariorum quibus Commercii
Curá commissa est 1697.
Chelseiæ mortuus, &, comitante
Magna Procerum
Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compositions of Stepney *made grey authors blush*. I know not whether his poems will appear such wonders to the present age. One cannot always easily find the reason for which the world has sometimes conspired to squander praise. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, because the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not considered as rivals by the distributors of fame.

He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of Juvenal; but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recompense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is, in the whole, little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.

J. PHILIPS.

# J. PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December 1676, at Bampton in Oxfordshire; of which place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestick, after which he was sent to Winchester, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his biographer, he was soon distinguished by the superiority of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be credited, so much endeared himself to his schoolfellows by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur or ill-will, saw him indulged by the master with particular immunities. It is related, that when he was at school, he seldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his sovereign pleasure was to sit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody, whose service he found means to procure*.

At school he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himself at Christ-church; a college at that time in the highest reputation, by the transmission of Busby's scholars to the care first of *Hill*, and afterwards of *Aldrich*. Here he was distinguished as a genius eminent among the eminent, and for friendship particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra and Hippolytus*. The profession which he intended to follow was that of Physick; and he took much delight in natural history, of which botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confined to his friends and to the university; till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which struck the publick attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected.

This

* Isaac Vossius relates that he also delighted in having his hair combed when he could have it done by barbers or other persons skilled in the rules of prosody. Of the passage that contains this ridiculous envy, the following is a translation: "Many people take delight in the rubbing of their limbs, and the combing of their hair, but these exercises would delight much more, if the servants at the baths, and of the barbers, were so skilful in this art, that they could express any measures with their fingers. I remember that more than once I have fallen into the hands of men of this sort, who could imitate any measure of songs in combing the hair, so as sometimes to express very intelligible Iambics, Trochees, Dactyls, &c. from whence there arose to me no small delight." See his Treatise De Poematum cantu viribus Rythmi, Oxon. 1673. p. 64. H.

This performance raised him so high, that when Europe resounde the victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult opposition dison, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is said t would willingly have declined the task, but that his friends urged it him. It appears that he wrote this poem at the house of Mr. St. Joh

*Blenheim* was published in 1705. The next year produced his g work, the poem upon *Cider*, in two books; which was received witl praises, and continued long to be read, as an imitation of Virgil's *G* which needed not shun the presence of the original.

He then grew probably more confident of his own abilities, and be meditate a poem on the *Last Day*; a subject on which no mind can h equal expectation.

This work he did not live to finish; his diseases, a slow consumpti an asthma, put a stop to his studies; and on Feb. 15, 1708, at the beg of his thirty-third year, put an end to his life. He was buried in the dral of Hereford; and Sir *Simon Harcourt*, afterwards Lord Chan gave him a monument in Westminster Abbey. The inscription at Westn was written, as I have heard, by Dr. *Atterbury*, though commonly gi Dr. *Freind*.

His Epitaph at Hereford:

JOHANNES PHILIPS
Obiit 15 die. Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708.
Ætat. suæ 32.

Cujus
Ossa si requiras, hanc Urnam inspice;
Si ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule;
Si Tumulum desideras,
Templum adi *Westmonasteriense*:
Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa & preclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat,
Inscriptio.
Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,
Testetur hoc saxum
A Maria Philips Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoriæ non sine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Westminster.

Herefordiæ reconditur Ossa,
Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama
JOHANNIS PHILIPS:
Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
Immortale suum Ingenium,

Eruditione multiplici excultum,
Miro animi candore,
Eximiâ morum simplicitate,
Honestavit.
Litterarum Amœniorum sitim,
Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,
Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,
In illo Musarum Domicilio
Præclaris Æmulorum studiis excitatus,
Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,
Carmina sermone Patrio composuit
A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,
Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,
Versuum quippe Harmoniam
Rythmo didicerat.
Antiquo illo, libero multiformi
Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, & attemperato,
Non numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,
Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono,
Metiri:
Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono secundus,
Primoque pœne Par.
Res seu Tenues, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres
Ornandas sumserat,
Nusquam, non quod decuit,
Et videt, & assecutus est,
Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.
Fas sit Huic,
Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere
O Poesis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
Alterum tibi latus claudere,
Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium
Non dedecebit Chorum.
Simon Harcourt Miles
Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti
Quoad viveret Fautor,
Post Obitum piè memor,
Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.
J. Philips, Stephani, S. T. P. Archidiaconi
Salop, Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ
In agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.
Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious; who bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and tedious and painful maladies without impatience: beloved by those that

knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His conversation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which seems to have flowed only among his intimates; for I have been told, that he was in company silent and barren, and employed only upon the pleasures of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he has found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of those who please by not offending, and whose person was loved because his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had disgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Centos*. To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are presented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of such performances begins and ends with the first author. He that should again adapt Milton's phrase to the gross incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, must yet expect but a small part of the praise which Philips has obtained; he can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

"The parody on Milton," says Gildon, "is the only tolerable production "of its author." This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow his supreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a scholar, *all inexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the composition of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes *Marlborough* behold at a distance the slaughter made by *Tallard*, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips sits down with a resolution to make no more musick than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had

had. Those asperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradise Lost*, are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits several artful accommodations of classick expressions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the odes of *Hannes*.*.

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the *Georgicks*, may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that *there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem*.

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees, with sentiments more generally alluring, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redstreak* and *pearmain*.

What study could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficience cannot be supplied. He seems not born to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence, but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius*.

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been transcribed from the Bodleian manuscripts.

" A prefatory Discourse to the poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.

" It is altogether as equitable some account should be given of those who have distinguished themselves by their writings, as of those who are renowned for great actions. It is but reasonable they, who contribute so much to the immortality

* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the last. They all read;

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus insidet.

The author probably wrote,

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus insidet. Dr. J.

tality of others, should have some share in it themselves; and since their genius only is discovered by their works, it is just that their virtues should be recorded by their friends. For no modest men (as the person I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyricks; and it is very hard that they should go without reputation, only because they the more deserve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we must be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and social virtues are more easily transcribed. The Life of Cowley is more instructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wished, since Mr. Philips had so many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had some of the abilities of his historian.

The Grecian philosophers have had their Lives written, their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very just to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe must be acquainted with his accomplishments. They give praise and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru's and Molieres as well as their Condés and Turennes; their Pellisons and Racines have their elegies, as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praises of the learned.

I am satisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a subject of their panegyricks, and perhaps set in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to submit.

I shall therefore endeavour to do justice to his memory, since nobody else undertakes it. And indeed I can assign no cause why so many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myself to give an account of him) should forbear to celebrate the memory of one so dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work entirely belonging to me.

I shall content myself with giving only a character of the person and his writings, without meddling with the transactions of his life, which was altogether private: I shall only make this known observation of his family, that there were scarce so many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are still living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful mother, like the mother of the gods, seems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modesty nor the humour of the present age permits me to speak; of the dead, I may say something.

One

One of them had made the greatest progress in the study of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly mastered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorff. He could refute Hobbes, with as much solidity as some of greater name, and expose him with as much wit as Echard. That noble study, which requires the greatest reach of reason and nicety of distinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loss to be deprived of one who understood a science so necessary, and yet so unknown in England. I shall add only, he had the same honesty and sincerity as the person I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reason more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for those posts, which the modesty of the latter made him refuse. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, composed several very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have wrote as finely, as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been so fit to describe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place, and while his brother was writing upon the greatest men that any age ever produced, in a style equal to them, he might have served as a panegyrist on him.

This is all I think necessary to say of his family. I shall proceed to himself and his writings; which I shall first treat of, because I know they are censured by some out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the least considerable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the rest. The style agreed so well with the burlesque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing else. Every body is pleased with that work. But to judge rightly of the other, requires a perfect mastery of poetry and criticism, a just contempt of the little turns and witticisms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect understanding of poetical diction and description.

All that have any taste of poetry will agree, that the great burlesque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much easier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former: but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master's hand.

It must still be more acceptable than the low burlesque, because the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itself entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The style of Billingsgate would not make a very agreeable

his work might be burnt, had not the same Augustus, that desired him to write them preserved them from destruction. A scribbling beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleasure he finds in writing; but that is seldom, when people are necessitated to it. I have know men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who could have as little understood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

False criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. *All this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's case.*

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occasion of their dislike. People, that have formed their taste upon the French writers, can have no relish for Philips, they admire points and turns, and consequently have no judgment of what is great and majestick: he must look little in their eyes, when he soars so high as to be almost out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes those passages of their own authors to be really sublime which come the nearest to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and fine one, and has more instances of the sublime out of Ovid de Tristibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

I shall allow, therefore, only those to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their standard.

But, before I enter on this subject, I shall consider what is particular in the style of Philips, and examine what ought to be the style of heroick poetry, and next inquire how far he is come up to that style.

His style is particular, because he lays aside rhyme, and writes in blank verse, and uses old words, and frequently postpones the adjective to the substantive, and the substantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, as and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uses frequent oppositions. Now let us examine, whether these alterations of style be conformable to the true sublime.

******

# WALSH.

ILLIAM WALSH, the son of Joseph Walsh, Esq. of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentle- mmoner of Wadham College.

left the university without a degree, and pursued his studies at London home; that he studied, in whatever place is apparent from the effect; became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, *the best critick in the nation.*

was not, however, merely a critick or a scholar, but a man of fashion, s Dennis remarks, ostentatiously splendid in his dress. He was like- member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the shire for his native in several parliaments; in another the representative of Richmond in hire; and gentleman of the horse to Queen Anne, under the duke of set.

ie of his verses shew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revo- ; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindness for n, to whom he gave a Dissertation on Virgil's Pastorals, in which, er studied, he discovers some ignorance of the laws of French :ation.

.705, he began to correspond with Mr. Pope, in whom he discovered arly the power of poetry. Their letters are written upon the pastoral y of the Italians, and those pastorals which Pope was then preparing )lish.

: kindnesses which are first experienced are seldom forgotten. Pope al- etained a grateful memory of Walsh's notice, and mentioned him in one latter pieces among those that had encouraged his juvenile studies.

> ——Granville the polite,
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write.

his Essay on Criticism he had given him more splendid praise: and, in inion of his learned commentator, sacrificed a little of his judgement gratitude.

e time of his death I have not learned. It must have happened between when he wrote to Pope; and 1711, when Pope praised him in his Essay.

The epitaph makes him forty-six years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself.

His works are not numerous. In prose he wrote *Eugenia, a defence of women;* which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

*Esculapius, or the Hospital of Fools,* published after his death.

*A collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant,* was published in the volumes called Dryden's Miscellany, and some other occasional pieces.

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epistolary Composition and Amorous Poetry.

In his *Golden Age restored,* there was something of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now strikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the first stanzas are happily turned, and in all his writings there are pleasing passages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and seldom rises higher than to be pretty.

# DRYDEN.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite, will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they reverenced his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwincle near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Tichmersh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or, if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge*.

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox; and his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems; at last exalts them into stars; and says,

No

* He went off to Trinity College, and was admitted to a Batchelor's Degree in 1653. H.

please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatick rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667 he published *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*, which may be esteemed one of his most elaborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own performance: "I am satisfied that as the "Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] are incomparably the best subjects "I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I "have performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem "with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with "elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroick stanzas of four lines: a measure which he had learned from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestick that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works, by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramatick rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his *Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry*; Howard, in his preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the *Indian Emperor*, replied to the Animadversions with great asperity, and almost with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Annus Mirabilis* was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards re-printed; and as the *Duke of Lerma* did not appear till 1668, the same year in which the dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The salary of the laureat had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The same year he published his Essay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and instructive dialogue, in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the duke of Dorset. This work seems to have given Addison a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

*Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*, (1668) is a tragi-comedy. In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions? and determines very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinions; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

*Sir Martin Marr-all* (1668) is a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

*The Tempest* (1670) is an alteration of Shakspeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," says he, "I found of so quick a "fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly "produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first "thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least "happy, and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it "remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations "were such as could not easily enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare's monster Caliban is added a sister-monster Sycorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the *Empress of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle;* which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

Of

Of Settle he gives this character. "He's an animal of a most deploted "understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, "and some glimmerings of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or "English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly "lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent "which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but with "the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; "so that for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express "any thing either naturally or justly!"

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great "felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of "him. His King, his two empresses, his villain, and his sub-villain, nay "his hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born "and bred in them, and something of the Elkanah will be visible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude "this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet,

"To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,
"Which back'd with thunder do but gild a storm."

"*Conform a smile to lightning*, make a *smile* imitate *lightning*, and *flattering light-*
"*ning*: lightning sure is a threatning thing. And this lightning must *gild a*
"*storm*. Now if I must conform by smiles to lightning, then my smiles must
"gild a storm too: to *gild* with *smiles* is a new invention of gilding. And
"gild a storm by being *backed with thunder*. Thunder is part of the storm;
"so one part of the storm must help to *gild* another part, and help by *backing*;
"as if a man would guild a thing the better for being backed, or having a
"load upon his back. So that here is *gilding* by *conforming*, *smiling*, *lightning*,
"*backing*, and *thundering*. The whole is as if I should say thus, I will make my
"counterfeit smiles look like a flattering stone-horse, which, being backed
"with a trooper, does but gild the battle. I am mistaken if nonsense is not
"here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some
"smack in a storm, and being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once."

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify curiosity to quote it more largely.

Whene'er she bleeds,
He no severer a damnation needs,
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,
Than the infection that attends that breath.

"*That attends that breath*.—The poet is at *breath* again; *breath* can never
"escape him; and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with
"*pronouncing*

" *nouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the con-
" demned party *bleeds*; that is, she must be executed first, and sentenced
" after; and the *pronouncing* of this *sentence* will be infectious; that is, others
" will catch the disease of that sentence, and this infecting of others will tor-
" ment a man's self. The whole is thus; *when she bleeds, thou needest no greater*
" *hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by pronouncing a sentence*
" *upon her*. What hodge-podge does he make here! Never was Dutch grout
" such clogging, thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the
" stomach; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

" Now to dish up the poet's broth, that I promised:

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd
Of natures grosser burden we're discharg'd,
Then gently, as a happy lover's sigh,
Like wandring meteors through the air we'll fly,
And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,
We'll steal into our cruel fathers breasts,
There read their souls, and track each passion's sphere:
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here.
And in their orbs view the dark characters
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.
We'll blot out all those hideous draughts, and write
Pure and white forms; then with a radient light
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be
Gentle as nature in its infancy:
Till soften'd by our charms their furies cease,
And their Revenge resolves into a peace.
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
Whom living we made foes, dead we'll make friends.

" If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer myself to the stomach of any
" moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster
" white-broth. It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made of the gibblets of a
" couple of young geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous*
" *draughts, dark characters, white forms*, and *radiant lights*, designed not only
" to please appetite, and indulge luxury; but it is also physical, being an
" approved medicine to purge choler: for it is propounded by Morena, as a
" receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric humours: and, were it written
" in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor's
" bill. To conclude, it is porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a pig with a pudding
" in the belly, 'tis I know not what; for, certainly, never any one that pre-
" tended to write sense, had the impudence before to put such stuff as this
" into the mouths of those that were to speak it before an audience, whom
" he did not take to be all fools; and after that to print it too, and expose it
" to the examination of the world. But let us see, what we can make of this
" stuff:

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd—

sport of criticism; and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the *Conquest of Granada*, but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. "I considered that pleasure was not the only "end of poesy, and that even the instructions of morality were not so wholly "the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of piety were to be "omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to "forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dullness "of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose." Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the *Conquest of Granada* (1672) are written with a seeming determination to glut the publick with dramatic wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spight of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestick madness, such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

In the Epilogue to the second part of the *Conquest of Granada*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatick writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent: but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*, to whom *Sprat* addressed the Life of Cowley, with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instructions from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Cifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*, were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb: your writings "are like a Jack-of all-trade's shop; they have a variety, but nothing of va- "lue; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth pro- "duced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from ancient Pistol. "But I am," said he, "strangely mistaken if I have "not seen this very *Almanzor* of yours in some disguise about this town, and "passing under another name. Pr'ythee tell me true, was not this Huffcap "once the *Indian Emperor;* and at another time did he not call himself *Maxi- "min?* Was not *Lyndaraxa* once called *Almeria?* I mean under *Montezuma* "the Indian Emperor. I protest and vow they are either the same, or so "alike that I cannot from my heart, distinguish one from the other. You "are therefore a strange unconscionable thief; thou art not content to steal "from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analysing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the same description of the ships in the *Indian Emperor* of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to shew, that by studied misconstruction every thing may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

"Fate after him below with pain did move,
"And victory could scarce keep peace above.

"These two lines, if he can shew me any sense or thought in, or any thing "but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his "observations on *Morocco* sense:

"In the *Empress of Morocco* were these lines:

"I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,
"Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.

"On which Dryden made this remark:

"I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country; the sphere of "Morocco, as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water; but a globe is "no sphere neither, by his leave," &c. "So *sphere* must not be sense unless "it relate to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers "use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in *Granada:*

"I'll to the turrets of the palace go,
"And add new fire to those that fight below.

"Thence,

" Thence, Hero-like, with torches by my side,
" (Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.
" No, like his better fortune I'll appear,
" With open arms, loose veil, and flowing hair,
" Just flying forward from my rowling sphere.

" I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, " and be so critical in other men's writings. Fortune is fancied standing on a " globe not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first act.

" Because *Elkanah's Similies are the most unlike things to what they are com-* " *pared in the world*, I'll venture to start a simile in his *Annus Mirabilis*: he " gives this poetical description of the ship called the *London*:

" The goodly London in her gallant trim,
" The Phenix-daughter of the vanquisht old,
" Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
" And on her shadow rides in floating gold.
" Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,
" And sanguine streamers seem'd the flood to fire:
" The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
" Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.
" With roomy decks her guns of mighty strength,
" Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
" Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
" She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

" What a wonderful pother is here, to make all these poetical beautifications " of a ship! that is, a *phenix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last: " nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say " it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seemed a *wasp*. " But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare " ships to floating palaces; a comparison to the purpose, was a perfection he " he did not arrive to till his *Indian Emperor's* days. But perhaps his simi- " litude has more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great many guns in " her, and they, put all together, made the sting in the wasp's tail: for this " is all the reason I can guess, why it seemed a *wasp*. But, because we will " allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phenix sea-wasp*, and the rarity " of such an animal may do much towards heightening the fancy.

" It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the " senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this:

" Two ifs scarce make one possibility.
" If justice will take all and nothing give,
" Justice, methinks, is not distributive.
" To die or kill you is the alternative,
" Rather than take your life, I will not live.

" Observe, how prettily our author chops logick in heroick verse. Three " such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man

" but

" but himself would have come within the noise of. But he's a man of general
" learning, and all comes into his play.

" 'Twould have done well too, if he could have met with a rant or two,
" worth the observation: such as,

" Move, swiftly, sun, and fly a lover's pace,
" Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.

" But surely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's or not a lover's pace, leaves
" weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

" Poor Robin, or any other of the Philomathematicks, would have given
" him satisfaction in the point.

" If I could kill thee now, thy fate's so low,
" That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow,
" But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,
" That all thy men,
" Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

" Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixt, I cannot guess: but wherever
" it is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all Abdalla's subjects, piled upon
" one another, might not pull down his fate so well as without piling: besides,
" I think Abdalla so wise a man, that if Almanzor had told him piling his men
" upon his back might do the feat, he would scarce bear such a weight, for the
" pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

" The people like a headlong torrent go,
" And every dam they break or overflow.
" But unoppos'd, they either lose their force,
" Or wind in volumes to their former course.

" A very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. Torrents, I take it, let
" them wind never so much, can never return to their former course, unless
" he can suppose that fountains can go upwards, which is impossible: nay
" more, in the foregoing page he tells us so too. A trick of a very unfaithful
" memory,

" But can no more than fountains upward flow.

" which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is much more impossible.
" Besides, if he goes to quibble, and say that it is possible by art water may
" be made return, and the same water run twice in one and the same channel;
" then he quite confutes what he says; for, it is by being opposed, that it
" runs into its former course; for all engines that make water so return, do
" it by compulsion and opposition. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for
" a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, but come
" foreright back (if their upright lies straight to their former course), and
" that by opposition of the sea-water, that drives them back again.

" And for fancy, when he lights of any thing like it, 'tis a wonder, if it
" be not borrowed. As here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought
" in his *Ann. Mirab.*

" Old

" Old father Thames raised up his reverend head;
" But fear'd the fate of Simois would return;
" Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;
" And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

This is stolen from Cowley's *Davideis*, p. 9.

" Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,
" Hiding among thick reeds his aged head.
" And when the Spaniards their assault begin,
" At once beat those without and those within.

" This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure for one man to conq
" army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is some
" difficult; but this flight is pardonable, to some we meet with in *Gra*
" Osmin, speaking of Almanzor:

" Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,
" Made a just battle, ere the bodies join'd.

" Pray what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outri*
" *wind!* A tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest wi
" wind, is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet; for if he sup
" the tempest to be something distinct from the wind, yet as being the
" of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous: so t
" he takes it one way, or if he takes it the other, those two *ifs* will s
" make one *possibility*." Enough of Settle.

*Marriage Alamode* (1673) is a comedy dedicated to the Earl of Roche whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the prot of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Roch therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represe an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disresp the preface to Juvenal.

*The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery*, a comedy (1673), was driven o stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedic in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an op tunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censu

*Amboyna* (1673) is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, an perhaps written in less time than *The Virgin Martyr;* though the a thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little lab cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary formance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation ag their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to r his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old anin the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

*Troilus and Cressida* (1679) is a play altered from Shakspeare; but so a ed, that even in Langbaine's opinion, " the last scene in the third act is a ma

" pi

"piece." It is introduced by a discourse on the grounds of criticism in tra-"gedy," to which I suspect that Rymer's book had given occasion.

The *Spanish Fryar* (1681) is a tragi-comedy eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alteration of comick and tragick scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he, "cannot perform both parts, *is but half a writer for the stage.*"

The *Duke of Guise*, a tragedy (1683), written in conjunction with Lee, as *Oedipus* had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and "he happened," says Dryden, "to claim the promise just upon the finishing "of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite.—*Two* thirds of it "belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole "fourth act, and the first half or somewhat more of the fifth."

This was a play written professedly for the party of the duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controversy.

*Albion and Albianus* (1685) is a musical drama or opera written, like the *Duke of Guise*, against the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found*.

*The State of Innocence and Fall of Man* (1675) is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,
Jealous I was least some less skilful hand,
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill imitating would excel,)
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.



* Downes says, it was performed on a very unlucky day, viz. that on which the duke of Monmouth landed in the west; and he intimates that the consternation into which the kingdom was thrown by this event, was a reason why it was performed but six times and was in general ill received. H.

It is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the princess of Modena, then duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verse and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold figures, and ambitious fictions.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be "overpassed: I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies "of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent; and every "one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me." These copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

*Aureng Zebe* (1676) is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned; for the remoteness of place is remarked, by Racine, to afford the same conveniencies to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas: The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestick, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated, and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.

This play is addressed to the earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critick. In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epic poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The design," says he, "you know is great, "the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

*All for Love, or the World well lost* (1678), a tragedy founded upon the story of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, "is the only play which he wrote for "himself;" the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character;

character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended, as laudable and worthy of imitation, that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topicks of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and spriteliness.

*Limberham, or the kind Keeper*, (1680), is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses, that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it "so much exposed the keeping "part of the town."

*Oedipus* (1679) is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

*Don Sebastian* (1690) is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without sallies of frantick dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatick poetry.

*Amphitryon* is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

*Cleomenes* (1692) is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: "Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my "time like your Spartan." "That, Sir," said Dryden, "perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero."

*King Arthur* (1691) is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited, and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage*. In the dedication to the marquis

* This is a mistake. It was set to music by Purcell, and well received, and is yet a favourite entertainment. H.

marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre; upon which the company departed, and *Arthur* was exhibited no more.

His last drama was *Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Salisbury, he mentions "the lowness of fortune to which he has "voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed."

This play appeared in 1694. It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatick labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The play-house was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights, was *Southern*; and the first that had three was *Rowe*. There were, however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously, as occasions arose. By these dissertations the publick judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till, being asked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; "Not," said he, "young man, out of "disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap."

Though

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility: for he is said to have engaged by contract, to furnish four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678*, he published *All for Love*, *Assignation*, two parts of the *Conquest of Granada*, *Sir Matin Marr-all*, and the *State of Innocence*, six complete plays; with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has ever possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the duke of Buckingham and earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterises him, in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rehearsal*; a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler the author of *Hudibras*, Martin Clifford of the Charterhouse, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance; in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any thing that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history, is tedious and troublesome; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The *Rehearsal* was played in 1671 †, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the *Conquest of Granada* ‡ and *Assignation*, which were not published till 1678, in *Marriage Alamode* published in 1673, and in *Tyrannick Love* of 1677. These contradictions shew how rashly satire is applied.

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant, who in the first draught was characterised by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the *Rehearsal* still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise: how this affected Dryden does not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution by mishaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It

* Dr. Johnson in this assertion was misled by Langbaine. Only one of these plays appeared in 1678. Nor were there more than three in any one year. The dates are now added from the origi- edition. E

† It was published in 1672. E.

‡ *The Conquest of Granada* was published in 1672, *The Assignation* in 1673, *Marriage Alamode* in the same year, and *Tyrannick Love* in 1672.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the *Rehearsal* by which malice was gratified; the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volscius* in a single boot, is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation, his *Empress of Morocco*, having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester withdrew his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, "to have a "judgment contrary to that of the town." Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smarts of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamantine confidence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him, was that of plagiarism against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would, by denying part of the charge, have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left, in that perplexity which generally produces, a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight and twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verses, called *an Essay on Satire*, was shewn about

about in manuscript, by which the earl of Rochester, the dutchess of Portsmouth, and others, were so much provoked, that, as was supposed (for the actors were never discovered), they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his Art of Poetry; where he says of Dryden,

> Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes
> His own deserve as great applause sometimes.

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the Life of Polybius to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers; and those of Lucian and Plutarch to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English Tacitus he translated the first book; and, if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of Tacitus, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and, writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the Epistles of Ovid being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was necessary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on such occasions was regularly summoned, prefixed a discourse upon translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation, which must for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgment of the nation; and it was not easily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanshaw, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conspicuous by uniting politicks with poetry, in the memorable satire called *Absalom and Achitophel*, written against the faction which, by Lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which personal satire was applied to the support of publick principles, and in which therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager and the sale so large, that my father, an old bookseller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell's* trial.

The reason of this general perusal Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets; and thinks that curiosity to decypher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need

need to enquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muse*; ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to *Sommers*, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whose soever it was, has much virulence, and some spriteliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of *Absalom and Achitophel* had two answers, now both forgotten; one called *Azaria and Hushai*; the other *Absalom senior*. Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes *Absalom senior* to *Settle*, by quoting in his verses against him the second line: *Azaria and Hushai* was, as *Wood* says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year he published the *Medal*, of which the subject is a medal struck on lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by the same antagonist. Elkanah Settle, who had answered *Absalom*, appeared with equal courage in opposition to the *Medal*, and published an answer called *The Medal reversed*, with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them, who died forgotten in an hospital, and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding, might with truth have had inscribed upon his stone,

Here lies the rival and antagonist of Dryden.

Settle was, for his rebellion, severely chastised by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the virtues of judge Jefferies; and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

Of translated fragments, or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles, or settle the dates, would be tedious, with little use. It may be observed, that as Dryden's

Dryden's genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the accession of king James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir *Kenelm Digby* embraced popery; the two *Reynolds* reciprocally converted one another*; and *Chillingworth* himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties or such motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a Protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a Papist, overborn by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He, that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love Truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and, as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was the then state of Popery; every artifice was used to shew it in its fairest form; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his Judge.

The Priests, having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controversial papers found in the strong-box of Charles the Second, and, what was yet harder, to defend them against Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting Popery, he was employed to translate Maimbourg's History of the League, which he published with a large introduction. His



* Dr. John Reynold., who lived temp. Jac. I. was at first a zealous Papist, and his brother William as earnest a Protestant, but by mutual disputation each converted the other. Vide Fuller's Church History, p. 47. book X. li.

name is likewise prefixed to the English Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himself the translator. Perhaps the use of his name was a pious fraud, which however seems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occasion of it is said to have been, that the Queen when she solicited a son, made vows to him as her tutelary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate *Varillas's History of Heresies*; and, when Burnet published remarks upon it, to have written an *Answer*; upon which Burnet makes the following observation:

"I have been informed from England, that a gentleman, who is famous both "for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating "M. Varillas's History; but that, as soon as my Reflections appeared, he "discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, "if he thinks it is recovered by his Answer, he will perhaps go on with "his translation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertain- "ment for him as the conversation that he had set on between the Hinds and "Panthers, and all the rest of animals, for whom M. Varillas may serve "well enough as an author: and this history and that poem are such extra- "ordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author "of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that "the age has produced. If his grace and his wit improve both proportiona- "bly, he will hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has "made, from having no religion to chuse one of the worst. It is true, he "had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit; but, as for his morals, it is "scarce possible for him to grow a worse man than he was. He has lately "wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months labour; but in it "he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is "to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish "a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he would go on and finish his "translation. By that it will appear, whether the English nation, which "is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing our debate, "pronounced in M. Varillas's favour, or in mine. It is true, Mr. D. "will suffer a little by it; but at least it will serve to keep him in from "other extravagancies; and if he gains little honour by this work, yet he "cannot lose so much by it as he has done by his last employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controversy, he was desirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profession. To reason in verse was, indeed, one of his powers; but subtlety and harmony united are still feeble, when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he published the *Hind and Panther*, a poem in which the church of Rome, figured by the

*milk-*

*milk-white Hind*, defends her tenets against the church of England, represented by the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable which exhibits two beasts talking Theology, appears at once full of absurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and *Cowitry Mouse*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not likely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published by the facetious Thomas Brown, of which the two first were called *Reasons for Mr. Bayes's changing his religion*: and the third, *the Reasons of Mr. Hains the player's conversion and re-conversion*. The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two first dialogues Bayes is brought into the company of Crites and Eugenius, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. Bayes and Mr. Hains.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests of gross buffoonery, so that his performances have little intrinsick value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. Ajax, who happens to be mentioned, is, "he that wore as many cow-hides upon his shield as would have furnished "half the king's army with shoe-leather."

Being asked whether he has seen the *Hind and Panther*, Crites answers: "Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can stir no where but it pursues me; it haunts "me worse than a pewter-buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I "meet it in a band-box, when my laundress brings home my linen: some-"times, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house; some-"times it surprises me in a trunk-maker's shop; and sometimes it refreshes "my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your "comfort, too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, "but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasions as a frugal "tradesman can quote that noble treatise the *Worth of a penny* to his extra-"vagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed apples, and penny custards."

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. "To secure one's chastity," says Bayes, "little more is necessary than to leave off a correspondence with the other sex, "which, to a wise man, is no greater a punishment than it would be to a fana-"tic parson to be forbid *seeing* the *Cheats* and the *Committee*; or for my Lord "Mayor

"Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the sight of the *London Cuckolds*." This is the general strain, and therefore I shall be easily excused the labour of more transcription.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions: "You began," says Crites to Bayes, "a very indifferent religion, and have not mended the matter in "your last choice. It was but reason that your Muse, which appeared first "in a Tyrant's quarrel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usur-"pations of the *Hind*."

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the birth of the prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouse his imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the anticipated blessings. He published a poem, filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity! predictions, of which it is not necessary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and every blossom of popish hope was blasted for ever by the Revolution. A papist now could be no longer Laureat. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he had formerly stigmatised by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was deposed; but seemed very angry that Shadwell succeeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquisitely satirical, called *Mac Flecknoe*; of which the Dunciad, as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when, as chamberlain, he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent, by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of king James he had written nothing for the stage*, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a second Revolution, he produced *Don Sebastian* in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In

* Albion and Albianus must however be excepted. E.

In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius. Of Juvenal he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires; and of Persius the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the publick, as nurselings of the Muses. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epick as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of pagan deities, afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau observes, and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken, with this incurable defect, that in a contest between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and, to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a public stipend, was not likely in these times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with stealing: only, says he, "The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage."

In 1694, he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Fresnoy's Art of Painting into English prose. The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he published his version of the works of Virgil; and, that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the Pastorals to the lord Clifford,

the

the Georgics to the earl of Chesterfield, and the Æneid to the earl of Mulgrave. This œconomy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled by Pope "the fairest of criticks," because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his Fables published in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson; by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

In this volume is comprised the well known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it!

Part of this book of Fables is the first Iliad in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the first of May 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-street, of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary:

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then "bishop of Rochester and dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the lady "Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a present of "the ground, which was forty pounds, with all the other abbey-fees. The lord "Halifax likewise sent to the lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her "son, that, if they would give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would inter "him with a gentleman's private funeral, and afterwards bestow five hundred "pounds on a monument in the Abbey; which as they had no reason to refuse, "they accepted. On the Saturday following the company came; the corpse "was put into a velvet hearse, and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with "company, attended. When they were just ready to move, the lord Jefferies, "son of lord chancellor Jefferies, with some of his rakish companions com-"ing by, asked whose funeral it was: and being told Mr. Dryden's, he said, "'What! shall Dryden, the greatest honour and ornament of the nation, "be buried after this private manner! No gentlemen, let all that loved "Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, alight and join with me in gaining "my lady's consent to let me have the honour of his interment, which shall be "after another manner than this; and I will bestow a thousand pounds on a monument

" monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in the coaches, not " knowing of the bishop of Rochester's favour, nor of the lord Halifax's ge- " nerous design (they both having, out of respect to the family, enjoined " the lady Elizabeth and her son to keep their favour concealed to the world, " and let it pass for their own expence), readily came out of the coaches and " attended lord Jefferies up to the lady's bed-side, who was then sick. He " repeated the purport of what he had before said; but she absolutely refusing, " he fell on his knees, vowing never to rise till his request was granted. The " rest of the company by his desire kneeled also; and the lady being under a " sudden surprize, fainted away. As soon as she recovered her speech, she " cried, *No, no.* Enough, gentlemen, replied he; my lady is very good, she " says, *Go, go.* She repeated her former words with all her strength, but in " vain; for her feeble voice was lost in their acclamations of joy; and the " lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to Mr. Russel's, " an undertaker in Cheapside, and leave it there till he should send orders for " the embalment, which, he added, should be after the royal manner. His " directions were obeyed, the company dispersed, and lady Elizabeth and her " son remained inconsolable. The next day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on " the lord Halifax and the bishop, to excuse his mother and himself, by " relating the real truth. But neither his lordship nor the bishop would ad- " mit of any plea; especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the " ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself " waiting for some time without any corpse to bury. The undertaker, after " three days expectance of orders for embalment without receiving any, " waited on the lord Jefferies, who pretending ignorance of the " matter, turned it off with an illnatured jest, saying, that those " who observed the orders of a drunken frolick deserved no better; " that he remembered nothing at all of it; and that he might do " what he pleased with the corpse. Upon this, the undertaker waited upon " the lady Elizabeth and her son, and threatened to bring the corpse home " and set it before the door. They desired a day's respite, which was granted. " Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome letter to the lord Jefferies, who re- " turned it with this cool answer, ' That he knew nothing of the matter, " and would be troubled no more about it." He then addressed the lord Halifax " and the bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to do any thing in it. " In this distress Dr. Garth sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians, " and proposed a funeral by subscription, to which himself set a most " noble example. At last a day, about three weeks after Mr. Dryden decease, " was appointed for the interment. Dr. Garth pronounced a fine latin oration, " at the College, over the corpse; which was attended to the Abbey by a " numerous train of coaches. When the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden " sent a challenge to the lord Jefferies, who refusing to answer it, he sent " several others, and went often himself; but could neither get a letter deli- " vered, nor admittance to speak to him; which so incensed him, that he resolved,

" since

"since his lordship refused to answer him like a gentleman, that he wou
"watch an opportunity to meet, and fight off-hand, though with all the ru
"of honour; which his Lordship hearing left the town: and Mr. Char
"Dryden could never have the satisfaction of meeting him, though he soug
"it till his death with the utmost application."

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidenc nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar; and only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confused *.

Supposing the story true, we may remark, that the gradual change of ma ners, though imperceptible in the process, appears great when different tim and those not very distant are compared. If at this time a young drunken L should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what wou be the event, but that he would be justled out of the way, and compelled be quiet? If he should thrust himself into a house, he would be sent rougl away; and, what is yet more to the honour of the present time, I believe tl those, who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would n for such an accident, have withdrawn their contributions †.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though t duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to l dramatick works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a mon ment, he lay long without distinction, till the duke of Buckinghamshire ga him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughther of the earl of Berkshi with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to lord Sommers, not ve honourable to either party: by her he had three sons. Charles, John, a Henry. Charles was Usher of the palace to Pope Clement the XIth; and, v siting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Tham at Windsor.

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* An earlier account of Dryden's funeral than that above cited, though without the circumsta that preceded it; is given by Edward Ward, who in his London Spy, published in 1706, relates, t on the occasion there was a performance of solemn Musick at the College, and that at the proces which himself saw, standing at the end of Chancery-lane, Fleet-street, there was a concert of ha boys and trumpets. The day of Dryden's interment, he says was Monday the 13th of M which according to Johnson, was twelve days after his decease, and shews how long his funeral w in suspense. Ward knew not that the expence of it was defrayed by subscription; but complime lord Jefferies for so pious an undertaking. He also says, that the cause of Dryden's death was an inflammation in his toe, occasioned by the flesh growing over the nail, which being neglected, p duced a mortification in his leg. H.

† In the Register of the College of Physicians, is the following Entry: "May 3, 1700. C "within Censorii ordinarii. At the request of several persons of quality, that Mr. Dryden mi "be carried from the College of Physicians to be interred at Westminster, it was unanimou "granted by the President and Censors."

This Entry is not calculated to afford any credit to the narrative concerning lord Jefferies. E.

John was author of a comedy called *The Husband his own Cuckold*. He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man, conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He "was," we are told, "of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, "ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those "that had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went be-"yond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access; but "somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others; he had "that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He "was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable "to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest and very "easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As "his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory "tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more possessed of "knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication "was by no means pedantick, or imposed upon the conversation, but just "such, and went so far as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he "he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was ex-"tremely ready, and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer "who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit the "reprehensions of others, in respect of his own oversights or mistakes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shewn in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues; but courtesy and good humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance, and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his own character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation, because he expected it

to be solicited: and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such reverence of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness; he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural; the purpose was such as no man would confess; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe?

He has been described as magisterially presiding over the younger writers, and assuming the distribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgment is incontestable may without usurpation examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct; but there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine, and not one of those whose spritely sayings diverted company; and one of his censurers makes him say,

> Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay;
> To writing bred, I knew not what to say.

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation; whom merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's sluggishness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. "His "thoughts," when he wrote, "flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care "was which to chuse, and which to reject." Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk, yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden and those with whom Dryden consorted; who they were, Carte has not told; but certainly the convivial table

table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must, however, be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accused him of lewdness in his conversation; but, if accusation without proof be credited, who shall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained; the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastick homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

rather than disowned it. His tendency to profaneness is the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of criticks was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigencies. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expences no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureat, to which king James added the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal; and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers:

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq. or order, on the 25th of "March, 1699; the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration "of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq. is to deliver to "me Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred "verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's possession. "And I do hereby farther promise, and engage myself, to make up the said "sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the "said John Dryden, Esq. his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the "beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and seal, this 20th day of March, 1698-9.

"Jacob Tonson.

"Sealed and delivered, being first duly stampt, pursuant "to the acts of parliament, for that purpose, in the "presence of

"Ben. Portlock.
"Will. Congreve."

"March

"March 24th, 1699.

"Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-"eight pounds fifteen shillings, in pursuance of an agreement for ten thousand "verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have "already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more or less; "he the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the aforesaid sum of two "hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings three hundred pounds, at the be-"ginning of the second impression of the aforesaid ten thousand verses;

"I say, received by me

"John Dryden.

"Witness Charles Dryden."

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifest, from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment must have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he desires Tonson to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson. You will take "care not to depart before he goes away: for I have not completed the sheet "which I promised him; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all "the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known: Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed that his Fables obtained five hundred pounds from the dutchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the magnificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of *Alexander's Feast*.

In those days the œconomy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureat sometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me, that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horo-scope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

> The utmost malice of the stars is past.——
> Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
> And *high-rais'd Jove*, from his dark prison freed,
> Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
> Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

He has elsewhere shewn his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition, by attributing the same to some of the Ancients. The latter, added to this narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domestick manners of a man, whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two *Arts of English Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's *Essay on Dramatick Poetry* was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing.

He who having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from

om the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of amatic poems was then not generally understood. Audiences applauded by stinct; and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceases to be examined. Of art universally practised, the first teacher is forgotten. Learning once made opular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we ave bestowed upon ourselves as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastick criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment, by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of

Rymer and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians "malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte sapere;" that "it was "more eligible to go wrong with one, than right with the other." A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dressed in the graces of elegance; and if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for, of labour notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trap, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palemon and Arcite, says, "Novimus "judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam *Chauceri*, pulchro sane illo, & admo- "dum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque "Æneada æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi "non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam critices nor- "mam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, & in quo nunc occupatur."

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatick rhyme is generally known. *Spence*, in his remarks on Pope's Odyssey, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the Æneid, in favour of translating an epick poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the Iliad, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot

cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comick poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by *Sewel**. His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad, if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ super imposito moles geminata colosso.

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds, to exaggerations somewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty, if he had condemned him to straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impress into the service.

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard; he cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never seen; gives a false account of *Chapman's* versification; and discovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he translated the first book of the Iliad, without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be supposed, that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students, but his scholastick acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

In his dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetick. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shews what he wanted: or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and

* Preface to Ovid's Metamorphoses. Dr. J.

and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows muc is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and var conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy mory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion, by vigil that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, al active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of w every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a pleasant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the silent progress of tary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally negl them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultor fortuitous than constant and systematical.

It must be confessed that he scarcely ever appears to want book-lear but when he mentions books; and to him may be transferred the p which he gives his master Charles:

His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such, dead authors could not give,
But habitudes of those that live;
Who lighting him, did greater lights receive;
He drained from all, and all they knew,
His apprehensions quick, his judgment true
That the most learn'd with shame confess
His knowledge more, his reading only less.

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not underta give it; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been for lie scattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the question v his notice, his works must be perused with very close attention.

Criticism, either didactick or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, e those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in v the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are neve lanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, t it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid, the whole is animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. H be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces h upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every

is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much, will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegances in the same form, nor appears to have any other art than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shewn that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts, arises a great part of the beauty of style. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestick use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly strangers whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves, which they should transmit to things.

Those

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from had been rarely attempted; we had few elegances or flowers of speech roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-bor prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were shelter the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, m considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is rent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its f savageness.

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustrious played in our poetical translations of Ancient Writers: a work whic French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable t form with dexterity. Ben Johnson thought it necessary to copy Hora most word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, consi as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is sai Sandys, whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age, has struggle to comprise every book of the English Metamorphoses in the same num verses with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to shew t understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his dicti the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called v they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour alwaysbe rew by understanding them. Cowley saw that such copyers were a servile he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his au It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and gi just rules and examples of translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossib the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. Whil run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best when they divaricate, each must take its natural course. Where c pondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with som equivalent. "Translation therefore," says Dryden, "is not so loose "raphrase, nor so close as metaphrase."

All polished languages have different styles; the concise, the diffu lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consist the resem which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit t thor's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have give had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be soft hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed; nor sententious affecta have its points blunted. A translator is to be like his author; it is not his bu to excel him.

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry; and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, which the new translators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect; will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigences in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life, are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's Works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But, as is said by his Sebastian,

> What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed; and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication, till he has satisfied his friends and himself; till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination; and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the publick has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the Muse.

But

But after so many inauguratory gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who says anything not said before. Even war and conquest, however splendid, suggest no new images; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illustrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumalation; the composition must be dispatched while conversation is yet busy, and admiration fresh: and haste is to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional compositions may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the first publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick stanzas have beauties and defects: the thoughts are vigorous, and, though not always proper, shew a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are smooth; and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though Gondiber never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification: there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Johnson's ruggedness; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile,

> He, toss'd by Fate—
> Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
> But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to shew how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity he makes this remark:

> Well might the ancient poets then confer
> On Night the honour'd name of *counsellor*,
> Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
> We light alone in dark afflictions find.

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found:

> 'Twas Monk, whom providence design'd to loose
> Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
> The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene,
> Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
> To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
> Not in their bulk, but in their order strong,

Thu

Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:
But, when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make.
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay,
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let them play a-while upon the hook,
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper use of mythology. After having rewarded the heathen deities for their care,

With Alga who the sacred altar strows?
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes;
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain;
A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main.

he tells us, in the language of religion,

Prayer storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from thence,
As heaven itself, is took by violence.

and afterwards mentions one of the most awful passages of Sacred History. Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,

For by example most we sinn'd before,
And, glass-like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore.

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles.

The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straiten'd lungs.—

It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;
The lands returns, and in the white it wears
The marks of penitence, and sorrow bears.

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrc
A French poet read to Malherbe some verses, in which he represents F
as moving out of its place to receive the king. "Though this," said Mall
"was in my time, I do not remember it."

His poem on the *Coronation* has a more even tenour of thought.
lines deserve to be quoted.

You have already quench'd sedition's brand;
And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land:
The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause
So far from their own will as to the laws,
Him for their umpire, and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Cesar make.

Here may be found one particle of that old versification, of whi
believe, in all his works, there is not another:

Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.

The verses to the lord chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwarc
a conceit so hopeless at the first view, that few would have attempted it
so successfully laboured, that though at last it gives the reader more perp
than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it cost, yet it m
valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive:

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth seems join'd unto the sky:
So in this hemisphere our utmost view
Is only bounded by our king and you:
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,
Yet both are for each other's use dispos'd,
His to enclose, and yours to be enclos'd,
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptiness had come between.

The comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all resemblan
behind it:

And as the Indies were not found before
Those rich perfumes which from the happy shore
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray'd;

Battles have always been described in heroick poetry; but a sea-fight and artil lery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in the world befor poets describe them; for they borrow every thing from their predecessors, an commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the firs French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern wa or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had alread possession of those dreadful images. Waller had described a sea-fight. Milto had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully answer th expectation raised by such subjects and such a writer. With the stanza Davenant he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis, and incidental disquisitio and stops his narrative for a wise remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more sentiment than description, an does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences an make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines o Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden migh take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, "Orbem jam to "tum," &c.

Of the king collecting his navy, he says,

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first line seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque. Wh would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhap indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

The description of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very complea specimen of the descriptions in this poem:

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun:
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.
Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they bring;
Then first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake th' unequal war:
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy:

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die:

And, though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

In this manner is the sublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet: this surely needed no illustration; yet they must fly, not like all the rest of mankind on the same occasion, but "like hunted castors;" and they might with strict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noses—Their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Husband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the Castor, are images too domestick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry.

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave:
'Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moon-light did our rage deceive.

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame:
In firey dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumbering, smile at the imagin'd flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.)

In

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion, that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language; "and certainly," says he, "as those, who in a logical disputation keep to general terms would hide a "fallacy, so those who do it in poetical description would veil their ignorance."

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experience at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit. In the battle, his terms seem to have been blown away; but he deals them liberally in the dock:

So here some pick out bullets from the side,
Some drive old *okum* thro' each *seam* and rift:
Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.
With boiling pitch another near at hand
(From friendly Sweden brought) the *seams instops*;
Which, well laid o'er, the salt-sea waves withstand,
And shake them from the rising beak in drops.
Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* bind,
Or sear-cloth masts with strong *tarpawling* coats:
To try new *shrouds* one mounts into the wind,
And one below, their ease or stiffness notes.

I suppose there is not one term which every reader does not wish away.

His digression to the original and progress of navigation, with his prospect of the advancement which it shall receive from the Royal Society, then newly instituted, may be considered as an example seldom equalled of seasonable excursion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me discontented; he says, that by the help of the philosophers,

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are allied.—

Which he is constrained to explain in a note "By a more exact measure of "longitude." It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured science into poetry, and have shewn, by explaining longitude, that verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy.

His description of the Fire is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this

this world can offer to human eyes; yet it seems to raise little emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection, and now a simile, till at last he meets the king, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy; and then follows again the progress of the fire.

There are, however, in this part some passages that deserve attention; as in the beginning:

The diligence of trades and noiseful gain
And luxury more late asleep were laid!
All was the night's, and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of Nature did invade
In this deep quiet——

The expression "All was the night's" is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line:

*Omnia noctis erant placida composta quiete,*

that he might have concluded better,

*Omnia noctis erant.*

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:

The ghosts of traytors from the bridge descend
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice;
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which Poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

From this time, he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, "to "which," says he, "my genius never much inclined me," merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zeb*; and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote *Tyrannick Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the passions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the rise and fall of empire in the *Conquest of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love*, or *Don Sebastian*.

To

To search his plays for vigorous sallies, and sententious elegances, c fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicita were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatick labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but th promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistl Ovid; one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction the earl of Mulgrave.

Absalom and Achitophel is a work so well known, that particular criti is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversi will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is suscept acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of charac variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing mony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarce found in any other English composition.

It is not however, without faults; some lines are inelegant or impr and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Ch could not run continually paralled with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little ima or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedi though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that sooths the fa grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.

As an approach to historical truth was necessary, the action and catastr were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleasing dispropo between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formec of many sects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of chief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports, whil king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set fort view; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a speech,

Henceforth a series of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and l battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

In the second part, written by *Tate*, there is a long insertion, which, its poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentm though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general princi Self-love is a busy prompter.

The *Medal*, written upon the same principles with *Absalom and Achito* but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal lities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundati

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igle character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas, as a series of events, nultiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, since time has left it to itself, ot much read, nor perhaps generally understood; yet it abounds with hes both of humorous and serious satire. The picture of a man whose ensions to mischief are such, that his best actions are but inability of tedness, is very skilfully delineated and strongly coloured:

Power was his aim: but, thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul, he serv'd;
Rewarded faster still than he deserv'd:
Behold him now exalted into trust;
His counsels oft convenient, seldom just,
Ev'n in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds, he learnt in his fanatic years,
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears,
At least as little honest as he cou'd,
And, like white witches, mischievously good.
To this first bias, longingly, he leans;
And rather would be great by wicked means.

he *Threnodia*, which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analo-l, he call *Augustalis*, is not among his happiest productions. Its first and ous defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age ever, were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tenderness nor ity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetick. He seems to look round him images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavour-o enlarge them. "He is," he says, "petrified with grief," but the mar-ometimes relents, and trickles in a joke."

The sons of art all med'cines try'd,
And ev'ry noble remedy apply'd;
With emulation each essay'd
His utmost skill; *nay more, they pray'd:*
Was never losing game with better conduct play'd.

e had been a little inclined to merriment before, upon the prayers of a n for their dying sovereign, nor was he serious enough to keep heathen s out of his religion:

With him th' innumerable crowd of arm'd prayers
Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud;
*The first well-meaning rude petitioners.*
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the skies by offering up their own.
So great a throng not heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force *as in the giants war.*
The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendor without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyrick or elegiack-poetry. His poem on the death of Mrs. *Killigrew* is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. "Fervet immensusque ruit." All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendor of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And musick's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

The conclusion is likewise striking, but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wish the antithesis of *musick untuning* had found some other place.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the bless'd above:
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And musick shall untune the sky.

Of his skill in Elegy he has given a specimen in his *Eleonora*, of which the following lines discover their author:

Though

Though all these rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow space of life confin'd,
The figure was with full perfection crown'd;
Though not so large an orb, as truly round:
As when in glory, through the public place,
The spoils of conquer'd nations were to pass,
And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
The consul was constrain'd his pomp to crowd;
And so the swift procession hurry'd on,
That all, though not distinctly, might be shown;
So in the straiten'd bounds of life confin'd,
She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind;
And multitudes of virtues pass'd along;
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be seen, and then make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away;
Moments were precious in so short a stay.
The haste of heaven to have her was so great,
That some were single acts, though each compleat;
And every act stood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented:

As when some great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs, rise
Among the sad attendants; then the sound
Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,
Through town and country, till the dreadfull blast
Is blown to distant colonies at last;
Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
For his long life, and for his happy reign;
So slowly by degrees, unwilling fame
Did matchless Eleanora's fate proclaim,
Till publick as the loss the news became.

This is litle better than to say in praise of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates: the praise being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader; nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject is to the poet, what durable materials are to the architect.

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almost the only work of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence of his genius

nius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical: he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation.

> And this unpolish'd rugged verse I chose,
> As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaick in some parts rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is the *Hind and Panther*, the longest of all Dryden's original poems; an allegory intended to comprize and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council? He seems well enough skilled in the usual topicks of argument, endeavours to shew the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to ask why, since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic church.

This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and *Country Mouse* of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction chiefly consists the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems to readers almost a century distant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whose judgement was perhaps a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragrah.

> A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd:
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.

Yet had she oft been chac'd with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offense by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, "to give the majestic turn of heroick poesy;" and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majestick:

More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race
Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face:
Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Close clapp'd for shame; but his rough crest he rears,
And pricks up his predestinating ears.

His general character of the other sorts of beasts that never go to church, though spritely and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poesy:

These are the chief; to number o'er the rest,
And stand like Adam naming every beast,
Were weary work; nor will the Muse describe
A slimy-born, and sun-begotten tribe;
Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,
In fields their sullen conventicles found.
These gross, half animated, lumps I leave;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive;
But if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher
Than matter put in motion, may aspire;
Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay;
So drossy, so divisible, are they,
As would but serve pure bodies for allay;
Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things
As only buz to heaven with evening wings;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know not beings, and but hate a name;
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.

One more instance, and that taken from the narrative part, where style was more in his choice, will show how steadily he kept his resolution of Heroic gaiety.

For

The hopes of the public were not disappointed. He produced, say: "the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language." tainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have s his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Mill indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages seem to be the ebu of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can exci previously resolved not to be pleased.

His criticism extends only to the Preface, Pastorals, and Georgick as he professes to give his antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he ha his own version of the first and fourth Pastorals, and the first Georgick world has forgotten his book; but since his attempt has given him a p literary history, I will preserve a specimen of his criticism, by insert remarks on the invocation before the first Georgick, and of his poet annexing his own version.

Ver. 1.

"What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn
"The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn.

"It's *unlucky*, they say, *to stumble at the threshold*, but what has a *plenteo* "*vest* to do here? *Virgil* would not pretend to prescribe *rules* for *that* "depends not on the *husbandman's* care, but the *disposition of Heaven* altog "Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends somewhat on the *good method of* "and where the *land's* ill manured, the *corn*, without a miracle, can "*indifferent*; but the *harvest* may be *good*, which is its *properest* epithe "the *husbandman's skill* were never so *indifferent*. The next *sentence* is t "*ral*, and *when to plough* had been *Virgil's* meaning, and intelligible to "body; and *when to sow the corn*, is a needless *addition*."

Ver. 3

"The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine,
"And when to geld the lambs, and sheer the swine,

"Would as well have fallen under the *cura boum*, *qui cultus habendo sit* "as Mr. *D's deduction* of particulars."

Ver. 5.

"The birth and genius of the frugal bee
"I sing, Maecenas, and I sing to thee.

"But where did *experientia* ever signify *birth and genius*? or what grou "there for such a *figure* in this place? How much more manly i "*Ogylby's* version!

"What makes rich grounds, in what celestial signs
"'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines;
"What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,
"And several arts improving frugal bees,
"I sing, Maecenas.

"Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are yet much more to the p "than Mr. *D's* six."

Ver. 22.

" From fields and mountains to my song repair.

" For *patrium linquens nemus, saltusque Lycæi*—Very well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24.

" Inventor Pallas, of the fattening oil,
" Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil!

" Written as if *these* had been *Pallas's invention*. *The ploughman's toil*'s im-
" pertinent."

Ver. 25.

" ——The shroud-like cypress——

" Why *shroud-like?* Is a *cypress* pulled up by the *roots*, which the *sculpture* in
" the *last Eclogue* fills *Silvanus's* hand with, so very like a *shroud?* Or did not
" Mr. *D.* think of that kind of *cypress* us'd often for *scarves and hatbands* at
" funerals formerly, or for *widows' vails*, &c. if so, 'twas a *deep good thought.*"

Ver. 26.

" ——That wear
" The royal honours, and increase the year.

" What's meant by *increasing the year?* Did the *gods* or *goddesses* add more
" *months*, or *days*, or *hours* to it? Or how can *arva tueri*—signify to *wear rural*
" *honours?* Is this to *translate*, or *abuse* an *author?* The next *couplet* is bor-
" row'd from *Ogylby*, I suppose, because *less to the purpose* than ordinary."

Ver. 33.

" The patron of the world and Rome's peculiar guard.

" *Idle*, and none of *Virgil's*, no more than the sense of the *precedent couplet*;
" so again, he *interpolates Virgil* with that and *the round circle of the year to*
" *guide powerful of blessings, which thou strew'st around.* A ridiculous *Latinism*,
" and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the whole *period* is but one piece of
" *absurdity* and *nonsense*, as those who lay it with the *original* must find."

Ver. 42, 43.

" And Neptune shall resign the fasces of the sea.

" Was he *consul* or *dictator* there?

" And watry virgins for thy bed shall strive.

" Both absurd *interpolations*."

Ver. 47, 48.

" Where in the void of heaven a place is free.
" *Ah happy*, D——n, *were* that place *for thee!*

" But where is *that void?* Or, what does our *translator* mean by it? He knows
" what *Ovid* says *God* did, to prevent such a *void* in heaven; perhaps, this
" was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more sensibly."

Ver. 49.

" The scorpion ready to receive thy laws.
" No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* so fast."

Ver. 56.

" Though Proserpine affects her silent seat.
" What made *her* then so *angry* with *Ascalaphus*, for preventing her retur
" She was now mus'd to *Patience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rat
" than *fond* of her *residence*."

Ver. 61, 62, 63.

" Pity the poet's, and the ploughman's cares,
" Interest thy greatness in our mean affairs,
" And use thyself betimes to hear our prayers.

" Which is such a wretched *perversion* of *Virgil's noble thought* as *Vicars* wo
" have blush'd at; but Mr. *Ogylby* makes us some amends, by his better lin
" O wheresoe'er thou art, from thence incline,
" And grant assistance to my bold design!
" Pity, with me, poor husbandmen's affairs,
" And now, as if translated, hear our prayers.

" This is *sense*, and *to the purpose*: the other, poor *mistaken stuff*."

Such were the strictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors; and whom it may be reasonably imagined, that many who favoured his desi were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examin and found, like all others, to be sometimes erroneous, and sometimes licentio Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Bra attempted in blank verse a translation of the Eneid, which, when dragg into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; I that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue inform me.

With not much better success, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his Prelectic had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the Eneid; which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he h afterwards perseverance enough to add the Eclogues and Georgicks. His bo may continue its existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of schoolbo

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's nu bers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts ha been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men b qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidic comparison, by opposing one passage to another; a work of which the would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to n

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a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination I will consent that Dryden should be tried; of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

His last work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of *Boiardo* has been new-dressed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the Cock seems hardly worth revival; and the story of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece, where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigismunda* may be defended by the celebrity of the story. *Theodore* and *Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of such reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was translated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The ode for *St. Cecilia's* Day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced perhaps superiour in the whole; but without any single part, equal to the first stanza of the other.

It

—'Tis but because the Living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new:
Let me th' experiment before you try,
I'll shew you first how easy 'tis to die.

—There with a forest of their darts he strove;
And stood like *Capaneus* defying Jove,
With his broad sword the boldest beating down,
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Possession of your earth;
If burnt and scatter'd in the air, the winds
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty,
And spread me o'er your clime; for where one atom
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.

Of these quotations the two first may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of such selection there is no end. I will add only a few more passages; of which the first, though it may perhaps be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry: as the meaning that it has is noble:

No, there is a necessity in Fate,
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate;
He keeps his object ever full in sight,
And that assurance holds him firm and right;
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,
But right before there is no precipice;
Fear makes men look aside, and so their footing miss.

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant the second magnificent; whether either be just, let the reader judge:

What precious drops are these,
Which silently each other's track pursue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?
——Resign your castle——
—Enter, brave Sir; for, when you speak the word,
The gates shall open of their own accord;
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

The bursts of extravagance, Dryden calls the "Dalilahs" of the Theatre and owns that many noisy lines of Maximin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; "but I knew," says he, "that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them." There is surely reason to suspect that

he pleased himself as well as his audience; and that these, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes like almost all other poets, very frequent use of mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantick ostentation; as when, in translating Virgil, he says, "tack to the larboard"—and "veer starboard;" and talks, in another work, of "virtue spooning before the wind." His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:

> They Nature's king through Nature's opticks view'd;
> Revers'd they view'd him lessen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object.

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression?

> A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
> In firmamental waters dipp'd above,
> Of this a broad *extinguisher* he makes,
> And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry strove.

When he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal, he intermingles this image:

> When rattling bones together fly,
> From the four quarters of the sky.

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his Elegy on Cromwell:

> No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,
> Than the *light Monsieur* the *grave Don* outweigh'd;
> His fortune turn'd the scale———

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation; such as *fraicheur* for *coolness*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together, without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be

be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself; but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts: and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.

What can be said of his versification will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope:

> Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verse, the full resounding line,
> The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Some improvements had been already made in English numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuse the flowing and the sonorous words: to vary the pauses, and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary; and in Hall's Satires, published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser, for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the Eneid was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the last.

The two first lines of *Phaer's* third Eneid will exemplify this measure:

> When Asia's state was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom stout,
> All guiltless, by the power of gods above was rooted out.

As these lines had their break, or *cæsura*, always at the eighth syllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately, consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyrick measures; as,

Relentless Time, destroying power,
Which stone and brass obey,
Who giv'st to every flying hour
To work some new decay.

he Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as *Drayton's ion*, were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and n syllables were interchanged with one another, Cowley was the first serted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroick lines of ten syllaund from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

Triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. *Swift* always ed them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their ety, it is to be considered that the essence of verse is regularity, and ment is variety. To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harally by some known and settled rule; a rule however lax enough to subsimilitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to the ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed actyls and spodees differently combined; the English heroick admits of or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables; but the English drine breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllaore than he expected.

effect of the Triplet is the same: the ear has been accustomed to exnew rhyme in every couplet; but is on a sudden surprized with three s together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he tain notice of the change from the braces of the Margin. Surely there ething unskilful in the necessity of such mechanical direction.

sidering the metrical art simply as a science, and consequently excluscasuality, we must allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by , are interruptions of that constancy to which science aspires. And the variety which they produce may very justly be desired, yet, to our poetry exact, there ought to be some stated mode of admitting

till some such regulation can be formed, I wish them still to be retained r present state. They are sometimes convenient to the poet. *Fenton* opinion, that Dryden was too liberal, and Pope too sparing, in their use. rhymes of Dryden are commonly just, and he valued himself for his ss in finding them; but he is sometimes open to objection.

the common practice of our poets to end the second line with a weak or syllable:

Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*,

Dryden sometimes puts the weak rhymes in the first:

Laugh, all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
And all the standing army of the sky,

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the first line o plet, which, though the French seem to do it without irregularity, displeases in English poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very di fabricated by him. It invariably acquires a break at the sixth syllable which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden so neglected:

And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.

Of Dryden's works it was said by Pope, that "he could select fro "better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English "could supply." Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enri language with such variety of models. To him we owe the the impro perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our langua much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taugh pere & fari," to think naturally and express forcibly. Though D reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he first who joined argument with poetry. He shewed us the true b a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, "ritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit." He found it brick, and he left it

THE invocation before the Georgicks is here inserted from Mr. Mill version, that, according to his own proposal, his verses may be compa those which he censures.

What makes the richest *tilth*, beneath what signs
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;
What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,
And all the management of frugal *bees*;
I sing, *Mæcenas!* Ye immensely clear,
Vast orbs of light, which guide the rolling year;
*Bacchus*, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
We fat'ning *corn* for hungry *mast* pursue,
If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* prest,
And *thin cold streams* with *sprightly juice* refresht;
Ye *fawns*, the present *numens* of the field,
*Wood-nymphs* and *fawns*, your kind assistance yield;
Your gifts I sing; and thou, at whose fear'd stroke
From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,
Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song;
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,

Whose snowy heifers on her flow'ry plains
In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains!
*Pan*, happy shepherd, if thy cares divine,
E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline;
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
And with thy lucky smiles our work approve;
Be *Pallas* too, sweet-oil's inventor, kind;
And he, who first the crooked *plough* design'd,
*Sylvanus*, god of all the woods, appear,
Whose hands a new-drawn tender *cypress* bear!
Ye *gods* and *goddesses*, who e'er with love
Would guard our pastures, and our fields improve;
You, who new plants from unknown lands supply,
And with condensing clouds obscure the sky,
And drop them softly thence in fruitful showers,
Assist my enterprize, ye gentle powers!

And thou, great *Cæsar!* though we know not yet
Among what gods thou'lt fix thy lofty seat;
Whether thoul't be the kind *tutelar God*
Of thy own *Rome*, or with thy awful nod
Guide the vast world, while thy great hand shall bear
The fruits and seasons of the turning year,
And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear;
Whether thou'lt all the boundless ocean sway,
Aud sea-men only to thyself shall pray,
*Thule*, the farthest island, kneel to thee,
And, that thou may'st her son by marriage be,
*Tethys* will for the happy purchase yield
To make a *dowry* of her wat'ry field;
Whether thou'lt add to heaven a *brighter sign*,
And o'er the *summer months* serenely shine?
Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
There yet remains a spacious *room* for thee;
Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arms declines,
And more to thee than half his *arch* resigns;
Whate'er thou'lt be; for sure the realms below
No just pretence to thy command can show:
No such ambition sways thy vast desires,
Though *Greece* her own *Elysian fields* admires.
And now, at last, contented *Proserpine*
Can all her mother's earnest prayers decline.
Whate'er thou'lt be, O guide our gentle course,
And with thy smiles our bold attempts enforce;
With me th' unknowing *rustics'* wants relieve,
And, though on earth, our sacred vows receive!

Mr.

"After all, we need not yield that the English way is not less conducing t
"move pity and terror, because they often shew virtue oppressed and vice pu
"nished; where they do not both, or either, they are not to be defended.

"And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps i
"may admit of dispute, whether pity and terror are either the prime, or a
"least the only end of tragedy.

"'Tis not enough that Aristotle has said so; for Aristotle drew his model
"of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and, if he had seen ours, migh
"have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say (what I hinted on pity
"and terror, in the last paragraph save one), that the punishment of vice anc
"reward of virtue are the most adequate ends of tragedy, because most condu-
"cing to good example of life. Now, pity is not so easily raised for a crimina
"(and the ancient tragedy always represents its chief person such,) as it is for
"an innocent man; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the of-
"fender is of the nature of English tragedy, contrarily, in the Greek, inno-
"cence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched
"with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers; and this was
"almost unknown to the ancients; so that they neither administered poetical
"justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we: neither knew they
"the best common place of pity, which is love.

"He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left
"us; for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly
"finished what they began.

"My judgment on this piece is this, that it is extremely learned; but that
"the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets:
"that all writers ought to study this critique, as the best account I have ever
"seen of the ancients; that the model of tragedy, he has here given, is excellent,
"and extremely correct: but that it is not the only model of all tragedy, because
"it is too much circumscribed in plot, characters, &c.; and, lastly, that we may
"be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them
"the preference with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

"Want of method in this excellent treatise makes the thoughts of the
author sometimes obscure.

"His meaning, that pity and terror are to be moved, is, that they are to be
"moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure
and instruction.

"And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The chief end of the
"poet is to please; for his immediate reputation depends on it.

"The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making
"pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for poesy is an art, and all arts are
"made to profit. *Rapin.*

"The

" The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those " or him whom he has murdered, or who have been the occasion of the tragedy. " The terror is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal; who, if " he be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied: if altogether " innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

" Another obscurity is, where he says Sophocles perfected tragedy by intro- " ducing the third actor; that is, he meant three kinds of action; one com- " pany singing, or another playing on the musick; a third dancing.

" To make a true judgment in this competition betwixt the Greek poets " and the English, in tragedy:

" Consider, first, how Aristotle had defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he " assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. " Fourthly, the means to attain the end proposed.

" Compare the Greek and English tragick poets justly, and without partia- " lity, according to those rules.

" Then, secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of " tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, hav- " ing not seen any others but those of Sophocles, Euripides, &c. had or truly " could determine what all the excellences of tragedy are, and wherein they " consist.

" Next, shew in what ancient tragedy was deficient; for example, in the " narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons, and try whether that be not " a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their excellence was so great, when " the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very " easy to do.

" Then make a judgment on what the English have added to their beauties; " as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions: as, namely, that " of love, scarce touched on by the ancients, except in this one example of " Phædra, cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they were of Fletcher!

" Prove also that love, being an heroic passion, is fit for tragedy, which " cannot be denied, because of the example alledged of Phædra; and how " far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

" To return to the beginning of this enquiry; consider if pity and terror be " enough for tragedy to move: and I believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, " it will be found, that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform man- " ners, by a delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of " dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved, as " the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue, and " hatred to vice: by shewing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; " at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, tho' it be shewn unfortunate; " and vice detestable, though it be shewn triumphant.

" If, then, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice be the " proper

" proper ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terror, though good means
" not the only. For all the passions, in their turns, are to be set in a ferm
" as joy, anger, love, fear, are to be used as the poet's common-places;
" general concernment for the principal actors is to be raised, by making
" appear such in the characters, their words, and actions, as will in
" the audience in their fortunes.

" And, if, after all, in a larger sense, pity comprehends this concern
" for the good, and terror includes detestation for the bad, then let us c
" der whether the English have not answered this end of tragedy, as w
" the ancients, or perhaps better.

" And here Mr. Rymer's objections against these plays are to be impar
" weighed, that we may see whether they are of weight enough to turn
" balance against our countrymen.

" 'Tis evident those plays, which he arraigns, have moved both those
" sions in a high degree upon the stage.

" To give the glory of this away from the poet, and to place it upo
" actors, seems unjust.

" One reason is, because whatever actors they have found, the event
" been the same; that is, the same passions have been always moved; w
" shews that there is something of force and merit in the plays themselves,
" ducing to the design of raising these two passions: and suppose them ev
" have been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace, vigour, and
" life upon the stage; but cannot give it wholly where it is not first.
" secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never seen them acted, if they
" not found these two passions moved within them: and if the general
" will carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his single testimony

" This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this ap
" as if one man says 'tis night, the rest of the world conclude it to be
" there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

" If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to p
" this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to
" those passions; but experience proves against him, that these means w
" they have used, have been successful, and have produced them.

" And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this, that Shaksp
" and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which
" lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and re
" too the same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the peopl
" whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Gr
" would not satisfy an English audience.

" And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer reason to please
" Athenians, than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only sh
" that the Athenians were a more judicious people; but the poet's busi
" is certainly to please the audience.

" W

"Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, "as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the "means which Shakespeare and Fletcher have used in their plays to raise "those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek "poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly: let "it be granted that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to "please the people by their usual methods, but rather to reform their judge-"ments, it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

"The faults, which he has found in their designs, are rather wittily "aggravated in many places than reasonably urged; and as much may be "returned on the Greeks, by one who were as witty as himself.

"2. They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabrick; "only take away from the beauty of the symmetry: for example, the faults "in the character of the King, in King and No-king are not, as he calls "them, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accom-"pany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of "his love; so that they destroy not our pity or concernment for him: this "answer may be applied to most of his objections of that kind.

"And Rollo committing many murders, when he is answerable but for "one, is too severely arraigned by him; for it adds to our horror and de-"testation of the criminal: and poetical justice is not neglected neither; for "we stab him in our minds for every offence which he commits; and the "point which the poet is to gain on the audience, is not so much in the death "of an offender as the raising an horror of his crimes.

"That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, "but so participating of both as to move both pity and terror, is certainly a "good rule, but not perpetually to be observed; for that were to make all "tragedies too much alike, which objection he foresaw, but has not fully "answered.

"To conclude, therefore: if the plays of the ancients are more correctly "plotted, ours are more beautifully written. And if we can raise passions "as high on worse foundations, it shews our genius in tragedy is greater; "for in all other parts of it the English have manifestly excelled them."

THE original of the following letter is preserved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq. to his sons in Italy, from a MS. in the Lambeth Library, marked N° 933. p. 56.

*(Superscribed)*

"Al Illustrisssimo Sigre
"Carlo Dryden Camariere
"d'Honore A. S. S.

"In Roma.

" Franca per Mantoua.

" Sept. the 3d, our style.

" Dear Sons,

" Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at " large, because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick " of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your " letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder " you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of " the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or " three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, " and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being " out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will " enquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the " master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is " bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball, merchants. " I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have " miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design " in the Dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for in every " figure of Æneas he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with " a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of " Sir Robert Howard's written long since, and lately put into my hands: " 'tis called *The Conquest of China by the Tartars*. It will cost me six weeks " study, with the problable benefit of an hundred pounds. In the mean time " I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the pa- " troness of musick. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I " could not deny the Stewards of the feast, who came in a body to me to " desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents " are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between " Michaelmass and Christmass, of which I will give you an account when " I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter; " but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent; yet, for " your sake, I will struggle with the plain openess of my nature, and keep " in my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the mean time, " I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer " for God's sake; being assured, before hand, never to be rewarded, though " the times should alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, " Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, " which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have " happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at " the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remem- " ber me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil suc- " ceeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation. You know the

profits

"profits might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honour "would suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, "since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I "suffer. It has pleased God to rise up many friends to me amongst my "enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negli- "gent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this lettter, "which I desire you to excuse; and am

"Your most affectionate father,
"JOHN DRYDEN."

# SMITH.

EDMUND SMITH is one of those lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praise but what can be given to intellectual excellence, seldom employed to any virtuous purpose. His character, as given by Mr. Oldisworth, with all the partiality of friendship, which is said by Dr. Burton to show "what fine things one man of "parts can say to another," and which, however, comprises great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to transcribe at once, than to take by pieces. I shall subjoin such little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. EDMUND SMITH was the only son of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of his father, which were soon followed by his death, were the occasion of the son's being left very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's sister), whose name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Westminster-school under the care of Dr. Busby; whence, after the loss of his faithful and generous guardian (whose name he assumed and retained), he was removed to Christ-church in Oxford, and there by his aunt handsomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious society, till within five years of his own; though, some time before his leaving Christ-church he was sent for by his mother to Worcester, and owned and acknowledged as her legitimate son; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aspersions that were ignorantly cast by some on his birth. It is to be remembered for our author's honour, that, when at Wesminster election he stood a candidate for one of the universities, he so signally distinguished himself by his conspicuous performances, that

hat there arose no small contention between the representative electors of Trinity-college in Cambridge and Christ-church in Oxon, which of those two royal societies should adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity-college having the preference of choice that year, they resolutely elected him; who yet, being invited at the same time to Christ-church, chose to accept of a studentship there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, seem to have been formed upon Horace's plan; who says, in his Art of Poetry.

" —Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
" Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium: alterius sic
" Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amice."

He was endowed by Nature with all those excellent and necessary qualifications which are previous to the accomplishment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet by a *curious felicity chiefly* susceptible of the finest impressions it received from the best authors he read, which it always preserved in their primitive strength and amiable order.

He had a quickness of apprehension, and vivacity of understanding, which easily took in and surmounted the most subtle and knotty parts of mathematicks and metaphysicks. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet solid and piercing; his taste delicate, his head clear, and his way of expressing his thoughts perspicuous and engaging. I shall say nothing of his person, which yet was so well *turned*, that no neglect of himself in his dress could render it disagreeable; insomuch that the fair sex, who observed and esteemed him, at once commended and reproved him by the name of the *handsome* sloven. An eager but generous and noble emulation grew up with him; which (as it were a rational sort of instinct) pushed him upon striving to excel in every art and science that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the most learned and polite university; and it was his happiness to have several contemporaries and fellow-students who exercised and excited this virtue in themselves and others, thereby becoming so deservedly in favour with this age, and so good a proof of its nice discernment. His judgement, naturally good, soon ripened into an exquisite fineness and distinguishing sagacity, which as it was active and busy, so it was vigorous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and strong imagination, always upon the wing, and never tired with aspiring. Hence it was, that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities; and his earliest productions were so far from having any thing in them mean and trifling, that like the junior compositions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors blush. There are many of his first essays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epique, still handed about the university in manuscript, which shew

shew a masterly hand; and though maimed and injured by frequent transcribing, make their way into our most celebrated miscellanies, where they shine with uncommon lustre. Besides those verses in the Oxford books, which he could not help setting his name to, several of his compositions came abroad under other names, which his own singular modesty, and faithful silence, strove in vain to conceal. The Encœnia and public Collections of the University upon State Subjects were never in such esteem, either for elegy and congratulation, as when he contributed most largely to them: and it was natural for those, who knew his peculiar way of writing, to turn to his share in the work, as by far the most relishing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary, so he well knew how to improve them; and not only to polish the diamond, but enchase it in the most solid and durable metal. Though he was an academick the greatest part of his life, yet he contracted no sourness of temper, no spice of pedantry, no itch of disputation, or obstinate contention for the old or new philosophy, no assuming way of dictating to others; which are faults (though excusable) which some are insensibly led into, who are constrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His conversation was pleasant and instructive; and what Horace said of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might justly be applied to him:

"Nil ego contulerim jocundo sanus Amico."
Sat. v. l. 1.

As correct a writer as he was in his most elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candour, and reserved his greatest severity for his own compositions; being readier to cherish and advance, than damp or depress a rising genius, and as patient of being excelled himself (if any could excel him) as industrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wished he had confined himself to a particular profession, who was capable of surpassing in any; but in this, his want of application was in a great measure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He passed through the exercises of the college and university with unusual applause; and though he often suffered his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out those jovial avocations, yet his return to his studies were so much the more passionate, and his intention upon those refined pleasures of reading and thinking so vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion), that the habit grew upon him, and the series of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better sort his ideas, and take in the sundry parts of a science at one view, without interruption or confusion. Some indeed of his acquaintance, who were pleased to distinguish between the wit and the scholar, extolled

extolled him altogether on the account of these titles; but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him justice as a prodigy in both kinds. He had signalized himself, in the schools, as a philosopher and polemick of extensive knowledge and deep penetration; and went through all the courses with a wise regard to the dignity and importance of each science. I remember him in the Divinity-school responding and disputing with a perspicuous energy, a ready exactness, and commanding force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily presided in the chair; whose condescending and disinterested commendation of him gave him such a reputation as silenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durst not contradict the approbation of so profound a master in theology. None of those self-sufficient creatures, who have either trifled with philosophy, by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms, and burdensome explanations, understood its real weight and purity half so well as Mr. Smith. He was too discerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abstruse, which some superficial sciolists (so very smooth and polite as to admit of no impression), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded prejudice, had affixed to this sort of studies. He knew the thorny terms of philosophy served well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion; and looked upon a school-divinity as upon a rough but well-wrought army, which might at once adorn and defend the Christian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin Classicks; with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth perusing in the French, Spanish, and Italian, (to which languages he was no stranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his own country. But then, according to the curious observation of the late earl of Shaftesbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticism; and, as it were, married the two arts for their mutual support and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that subject, which he had not diligently examined, from Aristotle down to Hedelin and Bossu; so that, having each rule constantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he seemed to read with a design to correct, as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taste every little delicacy that was set before him; though it was impossible for him at the same time to be fed and nourished with any thing but what was substantial and lasting. He considered the ancients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the same plan, the Art of Poetry; according to which he judged, approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the composition of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper), but strict justice that would not let him call

a few

a few flowers set in ranks, a gilb measure, and so many couplets, by the name of poetry: he was of Ben Johnson's opinion, who could not admire

——Verses as smooth and soft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor stream.

And therefore, though his want of complaisance for some men's overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian Speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, hath shewn the world how great a master he was of the Ciceronian eloquence, mixed with the consciousness and force of Demosthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wise reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roscommon, no man understood Horace better, especially as to his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the soft and the sublime. This endeared Dr. Hannes's odes to him, the finest genius for Latin lyrick since the Augustan Age. His friend Mr. Philips's ode to Mr. St. John (late lord Bolingbroke), after the manner of Horace's Lusory or Amatorian Odes, is certainly a master-piece: but Mr. Smith's Pocockius is of the sublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the most delicate and surprising turns peculiar to the person praised. I do not remember to have seen any thing like it in Dr. Bathurst, who had made some attempt this way with applause. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and so good an historian, that in familiar discourse he would talk over the most memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters, of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digested Thuanus's works, so he was able to copy after him: and his talent in this kind was so well known and allowed, that he had been singled out by some great men to write a history, which it was for their interest to have done with the utmost art and dexterity. I shall not mention for what reasons this design was dropped, though they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I speak it before living witnesses, whilst an agreeable company could fix him upon a subject of useful literature, nobody shone to greater advantage: he seemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius speaks of;

—Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.

His works are not many, and those scattered up and down in Miscellanies and Collections, being wrested from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a small part of that much greater

greater body, which lies dispersed in the possession of a numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made intire, without, great injustice to him, because few of them had his last hand, and the transcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolence for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the noblest beauties, and hath done justice to the ashes of that second Milton, whose writings will last as long as the English language, generosity, and valour. For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendship; a passion he was most susceptible of, and whose laws he looked upon as sacred and inviolable.

Every subject that passed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embellishments bestowed on it, which an exquisite skill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgement, could possibly bestow on it. The epique, lyrick, elegiac, every sort of poetry, he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raised to its proper height, and the differences between each of them observed with a judicious accuracy. We saw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other; and there was a predominant fancy and spirit of his own infused, superior to what some draw off from the ancients, or from poesies here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful industry and servile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his sentiments charming and majestick, his expressions natural and bold; his numbers various and sounding; and that enameled mixture of classical wit, which, without redundance and affection, sparkled through his writings, and were no less pertinent and agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a consummate tragedy, and the success of it was as great as the most sanguine expectations of his friends could promise or foresee. The number of nights, and the common method of filling the house, are not always the surest marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with: but the generosity of all the persons of a refined taste about town was remarkable on this occasion; and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused his interest, with all the elegant judgement and diffusive good-nature for which that accomplished gentleman and author is so justly valued by mankind. But as to *Phædra*, she has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the English stage, than either in Rome or Athens: and if she excels the Greek and Latin *Phædra*, I need not say she surpasses the French one, though embellished with whatever regular beauties and moving softness Racine himself could give her.

No man had a juster notion of the difficulty of composing than Mr. Smith, and he sometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reason to apprehend. Writing with ease, what (as Mr. Wycherley speaks) may be easily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a subject,

he would seriously consider what Demosthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace, if alive, would say upon that occasion, which whetted him to exceed himself as well as others. Nevertheless, he could not, or would not, finish several subjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briskness of his fancy, still hunting after new matter, or to an occasional indolence which spleen and lassitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was least inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit or vanity, or a fulness of himself (a frailty which has been imputed to no less men than Shakespeare and Johnson), is clear from hence; because he left his works to the entire disposal of his friends, whose most rigorous censures he even courted and solicited; submitting to their animadversions, and the freedom they took with them, with an unreserved and prudent resignation.

I have seen sketches and rough draughts of some poems he designed, set out analytically: wherein the fable, structure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, episodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were so finely laid out, so well fitted to the rules of art, and squared so exactly to the precedents of the ancients, that I have often looked on these poetical elements with the same concern, with which curious men are affected at the sight of the most entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Those fragments of the learned, which some men have been so proud of their pains in collecting, are useless rarities, without form and without life, when compared with these embryos which wanted not spirit enough to preserve them; so that I cannot help thinking, that, if some of them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the sketches of Julio and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few outlines, as to the design and proportion.

It must be confessed, that Mr. Smith had some defects in his conduct, which those are most apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing else. His freedom with himself drew severe acknowledgements from him than all the malice he ever provoked was capable of advancing, and he did not scruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults: but, if the world had half his good nature, all the shady parts would be entirely struck out of his character.

A man, who, under poverty, calamities and disappointments, could make so many friends, and those so truly valuable, must have just and noble ideas of the passion of friendship, in the success of which consisted the greatest, if not the only happiness of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though fortune threw him short of it in every other circumstance of life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reasonable, complaints of her dispensations, under which he had honour enough to be easy, without touching the favours she flung in his way when offered to him

t the price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no deal-
ıgs with mankind, in which he could not be just; and he desired to be at
o other expence in his pretensions than that of intrinsic merit, which was
he only burthen and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could
ay, as Horace did of himself, what I never yet saw translated;

"—Meo sum pauper in ære."

At his coming to town, no man was more surrounded by all those who
eally had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men, who had
hen a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and sciences, and gave
noofs of their fondness for the name of Patron in many instances, which
ill ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's character grew upon
is friends by intimacy, and out-went the strongest prepossessions which had
een conceived in his favour. Whatever quarrel a few sour creatures, whose
bscurity is their happiness, may possibly have to the age; yet amidst a
udied neglect, and total disuse of all those ceremonial attendances, fashion-
ble equipments, and external recommendations, which are thought neces-
ary introductions into the *grande monde*, this gentleman was so happy as still
o please; and whilst the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable, saw
ow much he excelled in wit and learning, they easily forgave him all other
ifferences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were
is own free choice. What Mr. Prior observes upon a very great cha-
acter, was true of him; *that most of his faults brought their excuses with*
*hem.*

Those who blamed him most, understood him least, it being the custom
of the vulgar to charge an excess upon the most complaisant, and to form a
haracter by the morals of a few; who have sometimes spoiled an hour or
wo in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great
ame, that single exception can never pass upon the best judges and most
quitable observers of mankind; and when the time comes for the world
o spare their pity, we may justly enlarge our demands upon them for their
dmiration.

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himself in several
onsiderable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to ex-
ect mighty things from him. I have seen about ten sheets of his *English*
*Indar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in
ur own language. He had drawn out a plan of a tragedy of the *Lady*
*ane Grey*, and had gone through several scenes of it. But he could not
ell have bequeathed that work to better hands than where. I hear, it is
t present lodged; and the bare mention of two such names may justify

the largest expectations, and is sufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

His greatest and noblest undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finished an entire translation of the *Sublime*, which he sent the reverend Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critick in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French version of Monsieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far short of it. He proposed a large addition to this work, of notes and observations of his own, with an entire system of the Art of Poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought*, *Diction*, and *Figure*. I saw the last of these perfect, and in a fair copy, in which he shewed prodigious judgement and reading; and particularly had reformed the art of Rhetorick, by reducing that vast and confused heap of terms, with which a long succession of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compass, comprehending all that was useful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter, he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns, the Greek, Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian poets, and to note their several beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgement, who loved him. It cannot be supposed they would suppress any thing that was his, but out of respect to his memory, and for want of proper hands to finish what so great a genius had begun.

SUCH is the declamation of Oldisworth, written while his admiration was yet fresh, and his kindness warm; and therefore such as, without any criminal purpose of deceiving, shews a strong desire to make the most of all favourable truth. I cannot much commend the performance. The praise is often indistinct, and the sentences are loaded with words of more pomp than use. There is little, however, that can be contradicted, even when plainer tale comes to be told.

EDMUND NEALE, known by the name of Smith, was born at Hanc ley, the seat of the Lechmeres, in Worcestershire. The year of his birt is uncertain *.

He was educated at Westminster. It is known to have been the practi of Dr. Busby to detain those youths long at school, of whom he had form the highest expectations. Smith took his Master's degree on the 8th July 1696: he therefore was probably admitted into the university in 168 when we may suppose him twenty years old.

* By his epitaph he appears to have been 42 years old when he died. He was consequently bo in the year 1668. E

His reputation for literature in his college was such as has been told; but the indecency and licentiousness of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24, 1694, while he was yet only Batchelor, a public admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulsion. Of this reproof the effect is not known. He was probably less notorious. At Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had exhibited sufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of the great Orientalist, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whose praise must have been written by Smith, when he had been but two years in the university.

This ode, which closed the second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps some objections may be made to its Latinity, is by far the best Lyrick composition in that collection; nor do I know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expresses, with great felicity, images not classical in classical diction: its digressions and returns have been deservedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He had several imitations of Cowley:

> Testitur hinc tot sermo coloribus
> Quot tu, Pococki, dissimilis tuo
> Orator effers, quot vicissim
> Te memores celebrare gaudent.

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator *pronounce the colours*, or give to *colours memory* and *delight*. I quote it, however, as an imitation of these lines;

> So many languages he had in store,
> That only Fame shall speak of him in more.

The simile, by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to Ætna flaming through the snow, which Smith has used with great pomp, is stolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Master of Arts, July 8, 1696. Of the exercises which he performed on that occasion, I have not heard any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation: for he continued to cultivate his mind, though he did not amend his irregularities, by which he gave so much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the Dean and Chapter declared, "the place of Mr. Smith void, he having been convicted of riotous "misbehaviour in the house of Mr. Cole an apothecary; but it was referred "to the Dean when and upon what occasion the sentence should be put in "execution."

Thus tenderly was he treated: the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wished that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some

Some time afterwards he assumed an appearance of decency; in his own phrase, he *whitened* himself, having a desire to obtain the censorship, an office of honour and some profit in the college; but, when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. *Foulkes*, his junior: the same, I suppose, that joined with *Freind* in an edition of part of Demosthenes. The censor is a tutor; and it was not thought proper to trust the superintendance of others to a man who took so little care of himself.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit against the Dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he considered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon upon him, I once heard a single line too gross to be repeated.

But he was still a genius and a scholar, and Oxford was unwilling to lose him: he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices, two years longer; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the instance of all the canons, the sentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, silent and tender; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he associated himself with the Whigs, whether because they were in power, or because the Tories had expelled him, or because he was a Whig, by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was, however, caressed by men of great abilities, whatever were their party, and was supported by the liberality of those who delighted in his conversation.

There was once a design, hinted at by Oldisworth, to have made him useful. One evening, as he was sitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter; and, having staid some time below, came up thoughtful. After a pause, said he to his friend, "He that wanted me below was Addison, "whose business was to tell me that a History of the Revolution was intend-"ed, and to propose that I should undertake it. I said, 'What shall I "do with the character of Lord Sunderland?' and Addison immediately "returned, 'When, Rag, were you drunk last?' and went away."

Captain *Rag* was a name which he got at Oxford by his negligence of dress.

This story I heard from the late Mr. Clark of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such scruples might debar him from some profitable employments; but, as they could not deprive him of any real esteem, they left him many friends; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a Prologue and Epilogue from the first wits on either side.

But learning and nature will now and then take different courses. His play pleased the critick, and the critick only. It was, as Addison has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had indeed trusted entirely to his

his merit, had ensured no band of applauders, nor used any artifice to force success, and found that naked excellence was not sufficient for its own support.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to sixty: and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitless importunity, gave notice that he would publish the play without it. Now therefore it was written; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of three hundred pounds a year. Smith, by pride or caprice, or indolence, or bashfulness, neglected to attend him, though doubtless warned and pressed by his friends, and at last missed his reward by not going to solicit it.

Addison has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as disgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondness for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addison is great; yet the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose, deserves regard. In this question, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a story which we are accustomed to reject as false, and the manners are so distant from our own, that we know them not from sympathy, but by study: the ignorant do not understand the action; the learned reject it as a school-boy's tale; *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with interest or anxiety. The sentiments thus remote from life are removed yet further by the diction, which is too luxuriant and splendid for dialogue, and envelopes the thoughts rather than displease them. It is a scholars play, such as may please the reader rather than the spectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accustomed to please itself with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the course of life.

Dennis tells us, in one of his pieces, that he had once a design to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced that the action was too mythological.

In 1709, a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occasion, wrote a poem, which justice must place among the best elegies which our language can shew, an elegant mixture of fondness and admiration, of dignity and softness. There are some passages too ludicrous; but every human performance has its faults.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchase for a guinea, and as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldisworth, I have never otherwise heard.

His

His *Longinus* he intended to accompany with some illustrations, and had selected his instances of the false *Sublime* from the work of Blackmore.

He resolved to try again the fortune of the Stage, with the story of Lady Jane Grey. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale, might determine him to choose an action from English History, at no great distance from our own times, which was to end in a real event, produced by the operations of known characters.

A subject will not easily occur that can give more opportunities of informing the understanding, for which Smith was unquestionably qualified, or for moving the passions, in which I suspect him to have had less power.

Having formed his plan and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his design; and, that he might pursue his work with less frequent avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Ducket to his house at Gartham in Wiltshire. Here he found such opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his studies, and particularly some strong ale, too delicious to be resisted. He eat and drank till he found himself plethorick: and, then resolving to ease himself by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a prescription of a purge so forcible, that the apothecary thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleased with the contradiction of a shopman, and boastful of his own knowledge, treated the notice with rude contempt, and swallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Ducket communicated to Oldmixon, the historian, an account pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's History was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smaldridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and insert the alterations.

This story was published triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be supposed to have been eagearly received; but its progress was soon checked; for finding its way into the Journal of Trevoux, it fell under the eye of Atterbury then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, that he never in his whole life had once spoken to Smith; his company being, as must be inferred, not accepted by those who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton of Eaton, a man eminent for literature, and, though not of the same party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too studious of truth to leave them burthened with a false charge. The testimonies which he has collected have convinced

ineed mankind that either Smith or Duckett was guilty of wilful and malicious falsehood.

This controversy brought into view those parts of Smith's life, which with more honour to his name might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet say a little more. He was a man of such estimation among his companions, that the casual censures or praises which he dropped in conversation were considered like those of Scaliger, as worthy of preservation.

He had great readiness and exactness of criticism, and by a cursory glance over a new composition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he so easily collected.

He therefore always knew what the present question required; and, when his friends expressed their wonder at his acquisitions, made in a state of apparent negligence and drunkenness, he never discovered his hours of reading or method of study, but involved himself in affected silence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration and conjectures.

One practice he had, which was easily observed; if any thought or image was presented to his mind, that he could use or improve, he did not suffer it to be lost; but, amidst the jollity of a tavern, or in the warmth of conversation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he says, very little use, but which the collector considered as a valuable stock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and dissolute; and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleasure; but his dress was always deficient: scholastick cloudiness still hung about him; and his merriment was sure to produce the scorn of his companions.

With all his carelessness, and all his vices, he was one of the murmurers at Fortune; and wondered why he was suffered to be poor, when Addison was caressed and preferred: nor would a very little have contented him; for he estimated his wants at six hundred pounds a year.

In his course of reading it was particular, that he had diligently perused, and accurately remembered, the old romances of knight errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and was something contemptuous in his treatment of those whom he considered as not qualified to oppose or contradict him. He had many frailties; yet it cannot but be supposed that he had great merit, who could obtain to the same play a prologue from Addison, and an epilogue from Prior; and who could have at once the patronage of Halifax, and the praise of Oldisworth.

For the power of communicating these minute memorials, I am indebt to my conversation with Gilbert Walmsley, late register of the ecclesiasti court of Litchfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Ducket; a declared, that, if the tale concerning Clarendon were forged, he should su pect Ducket of the falsehood; "for Rag was a man of great veracity."

Of Gilbert Walmsley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge mys in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the first frien that literature procured me, and I hope that at least my gratitude made worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy; yet he never r ceived my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence a malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apa I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief Revelation was unshaken; his learning preserved his principles; he gr first regular, and then pious.

His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of eq knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not imm diately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitu of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may doubted whether a day now passes in which I have not some advantage fr his friendship.

At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and instructive hours, with co panions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physick will be k remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have grati with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of m I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety nations, and impoverished the publick stock of harmless pleasure.

In the Library at Oxford is the following ludicrous Analysis of *Pocockius*:

Ex Autographo.

[Sent by the Author to Mr. Urry.]

OPUSCULUM hoc, Halberdarie amplissime, in lucem proferre hactenus distuli, judicii tui acumen subveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando Oden hanc ad te mitto sublimem, teneram, flebilem, suavem, qualem denam divinus (si Musis vacaret) scripsisset Gastrellus: adeo scilicet sublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo flebilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inspicias, versuum ordinem & materiam breviter referam. 1mus versus de duobus præliis decantatis. 2dus & 3us de Lotharingio, cuniculis subterraneis, saxis, ponto, hostibus, & Asia. 4tus & 5tus de catenis, subdibus, undis, draconibus, tigribus & crocodilis. 6us, 7us, 8us, 9us, de Gomorrha, de Babylone, Babele, & quodam domi suæ peregrino. 10us, aliquid de quodam Pocockio. 11us, 12us, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13us, 14us, de Hoseâ, & pisce, & de juvene quodam valde sene. 15us, 16us, de Ætnâ, & quomodo Ætna Pocockio fit valde similis. 17us, 18us, de tubâ, astro, umbrâ, lammis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Christianis, Ottomanis, Babyloniis, Arabibus, & gravissimâ agrorum melancholiâ; de Cæsare *Flacco**, Nestore, & miserando juvenis cujusdam florentissimi fato, anno ætatis suæ centesimo præmaturè abrepto. Quæ omnia cum accuratè expenderis, necesse est ut Oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietati constare fatearis. Subito ad Batavos proficiscor, lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochienses voco ad certamen Poeticum. Vale.

Illustrissima tua deosculor crura.

F. Smith.

* Pro *Flacco*, animo paulo attentiore, scripsisset *Marone*.

# DUKE.

OF Mr. RICHARD DUKE, I can find few memorials. He was bred at Westminster * and Cambridge *; and Jacob relates, that he was some time tutor to the duke of Richmond.

He appears from his writings to have been not ill qualified for poetical compositions; and being conscious of his powers, when he left the university he enlisted himself among the wits. He was the familiar friend of Otway; and was engaged, among other popular names, in the translations of Ovid and Juvenal. In his *Review*, though unfinished, are some vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity; nor have I found much in them to be praised †.

With the Wit he seems to have shared the dissoluteness of the times: for some of his compositions are such as he must have reviewed with detestation in his later days, when he published those Sermons which *Felton* has commended.

Perhaps, like some other foolish young men, he rather talked than lived viciously, in an age when he that would be thought a Wit was afraid to say his prayers; and whatever might have been bad in the first part of his life, was surely condemned and reformed by his better judgment.

In 1683, being then master of arts, and fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, he wrote a poem on the marriage of the Lady Anne with George Prince of Denmark.

He took orders; and being made prebendary of Gloucester, became a proctor in convocation for that church, and chaplain to Queen Anne.

In 1710, he was presented by the bishop of Winchester to the wealthy living of Witney in Oxfordshire, which he enjoyed but a few months. On February 10, 1710-11, having returned from an entertainment, he was found dead the next morning. His death is mentioned in Swift's Journal.

KING.

* He was admitted there in 1670; was elected to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1675; and took his Master's degree in 1682. N.

† They make part of a volume published by Tonson in 8vo. 1717, containing the poems of the earl of Roscommon, and the duke of Buckingham's essay on poetry, but were first published in Dryden's miscellany, as were most, if not all, of the poems in that collection. H.

# K I N G.

WILLIAM KING was born in London in 1663; the son of Ezekiel King, a gentleman. He was allied to the family of Clarendon.

From Westminster-school, where he was a scholar on the foundation under the care of Dr. Busby, he was at eighteen elected to Christ-church, in 1681; where he is said to have prosecuted his studies with so much intenseness and activity, that before he was eight years standing, he had read over, and made remarks upon, twenty-two thousand odd hundred books and manuscripts. The books were certainly not very long, the manuscripts not very difficult, nor the remarks very large; for the calculator will find that he dispatched seven a day, for every day of his eight years; with a remnant that more than satisfies most other students. He took his degree in the most expensive manner, as a *grand compounder*; whence it is inferred that he inherited a considerable fortune.

In 1688, the same year in which he was made master of arts, he published a confutation of Varillas's account of Wicliffe; and, engaging in the study of the Civil Law, became doctor in 1692, and was admitted advocate at Doctors Commons.

He had already made some translations from the French, and written some humorous and satirical pieces; when, in 1694, Molesworth published his *Account of Denmark*, in which he treats the Danes and their monarch with great contempt; and takes the opportunity of insinuating those wild principles, by which he supposes liberty to be established, and by which his adversaries suspect that all subordination and government is established.

This book offended prince George; and the Danish minister presented a memorial against it. The principles of its author did not please Mr. King, and therefore he undertook to confute part, and laugh at the rest. The controversy is now forgotten; and books of this kind seldom live long, when interest and resentment have ceased.

In 1697, he mingled in the controversy between Boyle and Bentley; and was one of those who tried what Wit could perform in opposition to Learning, on a question which Learning only could decide.

In

In 1699 was published by him *A Journey to London*, after the method o Dr. *Martin Lister*, who had published *A Journey to Paris*. And in 1700 h satirised the Royal Society, at least Sir *Hans Sloane* their president, in tw dialogues, intituled *The Transactioneer*.

Though he was a regular advocate in the courts of civil and canon law, he did not love his profession, nor indeed any kind of business which interrupted his voluptuary dreams, or forced him to rouse from that indulgence in which only he could find delight. His reputation as a civilian was yet maintained by his judgments in the courts of Delegates, and raised very high by the address and knowledge which he discovered in 1700, when he defended the earl of Anglesea against his lady, afterwards duchess of Buckingshire, who sued for a divorce, and obtained it.

The expence of his pleasures, and neglect of business, had now lessened his revenues; and he was willing to accept of a settlement in Ireland, where, about 1702, he was made judge of the admiralty, commissioner of the prizes, keeper of the records in Birmingham's tower, and vicar-general to Dr. Marsh the primate.

But it is vain to put wealth within the reach of him who will not stretch out his hand to take it. King soon found a friend, as idle and thoughtless as himself, in *Upton*, one of the judges, who had a pleasant house called Mountown, near Dublin, to which King frequently retired; delighting to neglect his interest, forget his cares, and desert his duty.

Here he wrote *Molly of Mountown*, a poem; by which, though fanciful readers in the pride of sagacity have given it a political interpretation, was meant originally no more than it expressed, as it was dictated only by the author's delight in the quiet of *Mountown*.

In 1708, when lord Wharton was sent to govern Ireland, King returned to London, with his poverty, his idleness, and his wit; and published some essays called *Useful Transactions*. His *Voyage to the Island of Cajamai* is particularly commended. He then wrote the *Art of Love*, a poem remarkable, notwithstanding its title, for purity of sentiment; and in 1709 imitated Horace in an *Art of Cookery*, which he published, with some letters to Dr. Lister.

In 1710, he appeared, as a lover of the Church, on the side of Sachevereil; and was supposed to have concurred at least in the projection of *The Examiner*. His eyes were open to all the operations of Whiggism; and he bestowed some strictures upon Dr. Kennet's adulatory sermon at the funeral of the Duke of Devonshire.

The *History of the Heathen Gods*, a book composed for schools, was written by him in 1711. The work is useful; but might have been produced without the powers of King. The same year he published *Rufinus*, an historical

rical essay, and a poem, intended to dispose the nation to think as he ought of the duke of Marlborough and his adherents.

In 1711, competence, if not plenty, was again put into his power. He was, without the trouble of attendance, or the mortification of a request, made gazetteer. Swift, Freind, Prior, and other men of the same party, brought him the key of the gazetteer's office. He was now again placed in a profitable employment, and again threw the benefit away. An Act of Insolvency made his business at that time particularly troublesome; and he would not wait till hurry should be at an end, but immediately resigned it, and returned to his wonted indigence and amusements.

One of his amusements at Lambeth, where he resided, was to mortify Dr. Tenison, the archbishop, by a public festivity, on the surrender of Dunkirk to Hill; an event with which Tenison's political bigotry did not suffer him to be delighted. King was resolved to counteract his sullenness, and at the expence of a few barrels of ale filled the neighbourhood with honest merriment.

In the Autumn of 1712 his health declined; he grew weaker by degrees, and died on Christmas-day. Though his life had not been without irregularity, his principles were pure and orthodox, and his death was pious.

After this relation, it will be naturally supposed that his poems were rather the amusements of idleness than efforts of study; that he endeavoured rather to divert than astonish; that his thought seldom aspired to sublimity; and that, if his verse was easy and his images familiar, he attained what he desired. His purpose is to be merry; but perhaps, to enjoy his mirth, it may be sometimes necessary to think well of his opinions.

SPRAT.

# SPRAT.

THOMAS SPRAT was born in 1636, at Tallaton in Devonshire, the son of a clergyman; and having been educated, as he tells of himself, not at Westminster or Eaton, but at a little school by the churchyard side, became a commoner of Wadham College in Oxford in 1651; and, being chosen scholar next year, proceeded through the usual academical course; and in 1657 became master of arts. He obtained a fellowship, and commenced poet.

In 1659, his poem on the death of Oliver was published, with those of Dryden and Waller. In his dedication to Dr. Wilkins he appears a very willing and liberial encomiast, both of the living and the dead. He implores his patron's excuse of his verses, both as falling "so infinitely below the "full and sublime genius of that excellent poet who made this way of writ-"ing free of our nation," and being "so little equal and proportioned to the "renown of a prince on whom they were written; such great actions and "lives deserving to be the subject of the noblest pens and most divine phansies." He proceeds: "Having so long experienced your care and indulgence, and been "formed, as it were, by your own hands, not to entitle you to any thing which "my meanness produces, would be not only injustice, but sacrilege."

He published the same year a poem on the *Plague of Athens;* a subject of which it is not easy to say what could recommend it. To these he added afterwards a poem on Mr Cowley's death.

After the Restoration he took orders, and by Cowley's recommendation was made chaplain to the Duke of Buckingham, whom he is said to have helped in writing the *Rehearsal.* He was likewise chaplain to the King.

As he was the favourite of Wilkins, at whose house began those philosophical conferences and enquiries, which in time produced the Royal Society, he was consequently engaged in the same studies, and became one of the fellows; and when, after their incorporation, something seemed necessary to reconcile the publick to the new institution, he undertook to write its history, which he published in 1667. This is one of the few books which selection of sentiment and elegance of diction have been able to preserve, though written

written upon a subject flux and transitory. The History of the Royal Society is now read, not with the wish to know what they were then doing, but how their Transactions are exhibited by Sprat.

In the next year he published *Observations on Sorbiere's Voyage into England, in a Letter to Mr. Wren.* This is a work not ill performed: but perhaps rewarded with at least its full proportion of praise.

In 1668 he published Cowley's Latin poems, and prefixed in Latin the Life of the Author; which he afterwards amplified, and placed before Cowley's English works, which were by will committed to his care.

Ecclesiastical benefices now fell fast upon him. In 1668 he became a prebendary of Westminster, and had afterwards the church of St. Margaret, adjoining to the Abbey. He was in 1680 made canon of Windsor, in 1683 dean of Westminster, and in 1684 bishop of Rochester.

The Court having thus a claim to his diligence and gratitude, he was required to write the History of the Ryehouse Plot; and in 1685 published *A true Account and Declaration of the horrid conspiracy against the late King, his present Majesty, and the present Government*; a performance which he thought convenient, after the Revolution, to extenuate and excuse.

The same year, being clerk of the closet to the king, he was made dean of the chapel-royal; and the year afterwards received the last proof of his master's confidence, by being appointed one of the commissioners for ecclesiastical affairs. On the critical day, when the *Declaration* distinguished the true sons of the church of England, he stood neuter, and permitted it to be read at Westminster; but pressed none to violate his conscience; and, when the bishop of London was brought before them, gave his voice in his favour.

Thus far he suffered interest or obedience to carry him; but further he refused to go. When he found that the powers of the ecclesiastical commission were to be exercised against those who had refused the Declaration, he wrote to the lords, and other commissioners, a formal profession of his unwillingness to exercise that authority any longer, and withdrew himself from them. After they had read his letter, they adjourned for six months, and scarcely ever met afterwards.

When king James was frighted away, and a new government was to be settled, Sprat was one of those who considered, in a conference, the great question, whether the crown was vacant; and manfully spoke in favour of his old master.

He complied, however, with the new establishment, and was left unmolested: but in 1692 a strange attack was made upon him by one *Robert Young* and *Stephen Blackhead*, both men convicted of infamous crimes, and both, when the scheme was laid, prisoners in Newgate. These men drew up an Association, in which they whose names were subscribed declared their reso-

lution to restore king James; to seize the princess of Orange, dead or alive, and to be ready with thirty thousand men to meet king James when he should land. To this they put the names of Sancroft, Sprat, Marlborough, Salisbury, and others. The copy of Dr. Sprat's name was obtained by a fictitious request, to which an answer *in his own hand* was desired. His hand was copied so well, that he confessed it might have deceived himself. Blackhead, who had carried the letter, being sent again with a plausible message, was very curious to see the house, and particularly importunate to be let into the study; where, as is supposed, he designed to leave the Association This however was denied him, and he dropt it in a flower-pot in the parlour.

Young now laid an information before the Privy Council; and May 7, 1692, the bishop was arrested, and kept at a messenger's under a strict guard eleven days. His house was searched, and directions were given that the flower pots should be inspected. The messengers however missed the room in which the paper was left. Blackhead went therefore a third time; and finding his paper where he had left it, brought it away.

The bishop, having been enlarged, was, on June the 10th and 13th, examined again before the Privy Council, and confronted with his accusers. Young persisted, with the most obdurate impudence, against the strongest evidence; but the resolution of Blackhead by degrees gave way. There remained at last no doubt of the bishop's innocence, who, with great prudence and diligence, traced the progress, and detected the characters of the two informers, and published an account of his own examination, and deliverance; which made such an impression upon him, that he commemorated it through life by an yearly day of thanksgiving.

With what hope, or what interest, the villains had contrived an accusation which they must know themselves utterly unable to prove, was never discovered.

After this, he passed his days in the quiet exercise of his function. When the cause of Sacheverell put the public in commotion, he honestly appeared among the friends of the church. He lived to his seventy-ninth year, and died May 20, 1713.

Burnet is not very favourable to his memory; but he and Burnet were old rivals. On some public occasion they both preached before the house of commons. There prevailed in those days an indecent custom; when the preacher touched any favourite topick in a manner that delighted his audience, their approbation was expressed by a loud *hum*, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleasure. When Burnet preached, part of his congregation *hummed* so loudly and so long, that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Sprat preached, he likewise was honoured with the like animating *hum*; but he stretched out his hand to the congregation, and cried, "Peace, peace, I pray you, peace."

This

This I was told in my youth by my father, an old man who had been no careless observer of the passages of those times.

Burnet's sermon, says Salmon, was remarkable for sedition, and Sprat's for loyalty. Burnet had the thanks of the house; Sprat had no thanks; but a good living from the king; which, he said, was of as much value as the thanks of the Commons.

The works of Sprat, besides his few poems, are, The History of the Royal Society, The Life of Cowley, The Answer to Sorbiere, The History of the Rye-house Plot, The Relation of his own Examination, and a volume of sermons. I have heard it observed, with great justness, that every book is of a different kind, and that each has its distinct and characteristical excellence.

My business is only with his poems. He considered Cowley as a model; and supposed that as he was imitated, perfection was approached. Nothing therefore but Pindarick liberty was to be expected. There is in his few productions no want of such conceits as he thought excellent; and of those our judgement may be settled by the first that appears in his praise of Cromwell, where he says that Cromwell's "fame, like man, will grow white as it "grows old."

# HALIFAX.

THE life of the Earl of Halifax was properly that of an artful and active statesman, employed in balancing parties, contriving expedients, and combating opposition, and exposed to the vicissitudes of advancement and degradation; but in this collection, poetical merit is the claim to attention and the account which is here to be expected may properly be proportioned not to his influence in the state, but to his rank among the writers of verse.

Charles Montague was born April 16, 1661, at Horton in Northamptonshire, the son of Mr. George Montague, a younger son of the earl of Manchester. He was educated first in the country, and then removed to Westminster; where in 1677 he was chosen a king's scholar, and recommended himself to Busby by his felicity in extemporary epigrams. He contracted a very intimate friendship with Mr. Stepney; and in 1682, when Stepney was elected at Cambridge, the election of Montague being not to proceed till the year following, he was afraid lest by being placed at Oxford he might be separated from his companion, and therefore solicited to be removed to Cambridge, without waiting for the advantages of another year.

It seems indeed time to wish for a removal; for he was already a schoolboy of one and twenty.

His relation Dr. Montague was then master of the college in which he was placed a fellow commoner, and took him under his particular care. Here he commenced an acquaintance with the great Newton, which continued through his life, and was at last attested by a legacy.

In 1685, his verses on the death of king Charles made such impression on the earl of Dorset, that he was invited to town, and introduced by the universal patron to the other wits. In 1687, he joined with Prior in the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, a burlesque of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. He signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, and sat in the convention. He about the same time married the countess dowager of Manchester, and intended to have taken orders; but afterwards altering his purpose, he purchased for 1500l. the place of one of the clerks of the council.

After

After he had written his epistle on the victory of the *Boyne*, his patron Dorset introduced him to king William with this expression; "Sir, I have "brought a *Mouse* to wait on your Majesty." To which the king is said to have replied. "You do well to put me in the way of making a *Man* of him;" and ordered him a pension of five hundred pounds. This story, however current, seems to have been made after the event. The king's answer implies a greater acquaintance with our proverbial and familiar diction than king William could possibly have attained.

In 1691, being member in the house of commons he argued warmly in favour of a law to grant the assistance of counsel in trials for high treason, and in the midst of his speech, falling into some confusion, was for a while silent; but recovering himself, observed, "how reasonable was it to allow "counsel to men called as criminals before a court of justice, when it ap- "peared how much the presence of that assembly could disconcert one of "their own body *."

After this he rose fast into honours and employments, being made one of the commissioners of the treasury and called to the privy council. In 1694, he became chancellor of the Exchequer; and the next year engaged in the great attempt of the re-coinage, which was in two years happily compleated. In 1696, he projected the *general fund*, and raised the credit of the Exchequer; and, after enquiry concerning a grant of Irish crown-lands, it was determined by a vote of the commons, that Charles Montague, esquire, *had deserved his Majesty's favour*. In 1698, being advanced to the first commission of the treasury, he was appointed one of the regency in the king's absence: the next year he was made auditor of the Exchequer, and the year after created *baron Halifax*. He was however impeached by the commons; but the articles were dismissed by the lords.

At the accession of queen Anne he was dismissed from the council: and in the first parliament of her reign was again attacked by the commons, and again escaped by the protection of the lords. In 1704, he wrote an answer to Bromley's speech against occasional conformity. He headed the Enquiry into the danger of the Church. In 1706, he proposed and negotiated the Union with Scotland; and when the elector of Hanover received the garter, after the act had passed for securing the Protestant Succession, he was appointed to carry the ensigns of the order to the electoral court. He sat as one of the judges of Sacheverell; but voted for a mild sentence. Being now no longer in favour, he contrived to obtain a writ for summoning the electoral prince to parliament as duke of Cambridge.

* This anecdote is related by Mr. Walpole, in his Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, of the Earl of Shaftesbury, author of the Characteristicks. E.

At

At the queen's death he was appointed one of the regents; and at the accession of George the First was made earl of Halifax, knight of the garter, and first commissioner of the treasury, with a grant to his nephew of the reversion of the auditorship of the Exchequer. More was not to be had, and this he kept but a little while; for on the 19th of May, 1715, he died of an inflammation of his lungs.

Of him, who from a poet became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miss of celebration. Addison began to praise him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets; perhaps by almost all, except Swift and Pope; who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death spoke of him, Swift with slight censure, and Pope in the character Bufo with acrimonious contempt.

He was, as Pope says, "fed with dedications;" for Tickell affirms that no dedication was unrewarded. To charge all unmerited praise with the guilt of flattery, and to suppose that the encomiast always knows and feels the falsehoods of his assertions, is surely to discover great ignorance of human nature and human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on experience and comparison, judgment is always in some degree subject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wish to admire.

Every man willingly gives value to the praise which he receives, and considers the sentence passed in his favour as the sentence of discernment. We admire in a friend that understanding that selected us for confidence; we admire more, in a patron, that judgment which, instead of scattering bounty indiscriminately, directed it to us; and if the patron be an author, those performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affectation will easily dispose us to exalt.

To these prejudices, hardly culpable; interest adds a power always operating, though not always, because not willingly perceived. The modesty of praise wears gradually away; and perhaps the pride of patronage may be in time so increased, that modest praise will no longer please.

Many a blandishment was practised upon Halifax, which he would never have known, had he had no other attractions than those of his poetry, of which a short time has withered the beauties. It would now be esteemed no honour, by a contributer to the monthly bundles of verses, to be told, that, in strains either familiar or solemn, he sings like Montague.

PARNELL.

# P A R N E L L:

THE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith a man of such riety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute ithout tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was co-ious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness. What such an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an stract from his larger narrative: and have this gratification from my at-mpt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory f Goldsmith.

Τὸ γὰρ λέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων.

THOMAS PARNELL was the son of a commonwealthsman of the same ame, who at the Restoration left Congleton in Cheshire, where the family ad been established for several centuries, and, settling in Ireland, purchased n estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who as born at Dublin in 1679; and, after the usual education at a grammar hool, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 700, he became master of arts; and was the same year ordained a deacon ough under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the bishop of Derry. About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705 Dr. Ashe, e bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the archdeaconry of Clogher. bout the same time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by hom he had two sons who died young, and a daughter who long survived im.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell as persuaded to change his party, not without much censure from those hom he forsook, and was received by the new ministry as a valuable rein-rcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited nong the crowd in the outer room, he went by the persuasion of Swift, ith his Treasurer's staff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him elcome: and as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it seems often to have happened

happened in those times to the favourites of the great, without attention t his fortune, which, however, was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was desirous to make him self conspicuous, and to shew how worthy he was of high preferment. A he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed hi elocution with great success in the pulpits of London; but the queen's deat putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope represent him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latte life he was too much a lover of the bottle, is not denied; but I have hear it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, th untimely death of a darling son; or, as others tell, the loss of his wife who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from hi personal interest with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbishop King, who gave hin a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage o Finglas in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Suc notice from such a man inclines me to believe that the vice of which he ha been accused was not gross, or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Chester on his way t Ireland.

He seems to have been one of those poets who take delight in writing He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably published more tha he owned. He left many compositions behind him, of which Pope selecte those which he thought best, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. O these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe t contradict. He bestows just praise upon the *Rise of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale* and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly remarked, that in th *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in English their origina effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he shoul have added, with modern applications; and when he discovers that *Ga Bacchus* is translated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked that th latter part is purely Parnell's. Another poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he says taken from the French. I would add, that the description of *Barrenness*, i his verses to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately searching fo the passage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-Piec on Death* is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment.

nt. He observes, that the story of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues vell's Letters*, and supposes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

mith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is the meanest; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happiest of Parnell's ances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I suspect to have been ed from Cleiveland.

general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise derived from the easy sweetness of his diction; in his verses there is ppiness than pains; he is spritely without effort, and always delights, he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. e is some appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it iry, is less pleasing. Of his other compositions it is impossible to ether they are the productions of Nature, so excellent as not to want p of Art, or of Art so refined as to resemble Nature.

criticism relates only to the pieces published by Pope. Of the large ages which I find in the last edition, I can only say that I know not they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They pon the faith of the compilers.

# G A R T H.

SAMUEL GARTH was of a good family in Yorkshire, and from th school in his own country became a student at Peter-house in Cambri where he resided till he commenced doctor of physick on July the 7th, 16 He was examined before the College at London on March the 12th, 1691 and admitted fellow June 16th, 1693. He was soon so much distinguis by his conversation and accomplishments, as to obtain very extensive practi and, if a pamphlet of those times may be credited, had the favour and c fidence of one party, as Radcliffe had of the other.

He is always mentioned as a man of benevolence; and it is just to supp that his desire of helping the helpless disposed him to so much zeal for *Dispensary*; an undertaking of which some account, however short, is p per to be given.

Whether what Temple says be true, that physicians have had m learning than the other faculties, I will not stay to enquire; but, I belie every man has found in physicians great liberality, and dignity of sentime very prompt effusion of beneficence, and willingness to exert a lucrative where there is no hope of lucre. Agreeably to this character, the colleg Physicians, in July 1687, published an edict, requiring all the fellows, c didates, and licentiates, to give gratuitous advice to the neighbouring po

This edict was sent to the Court of Aldermen; and a question being m to whom the appellation of the *poor* should be extended, the College answ ed, that it should be sufficient to bring a testimonial from a clergyman offi ting in the parish where the patient resided

After a year's experience, the physicians found their charity frustrated some malignant opposition, and made to a great degree vain by the h price of physick; they therefore voted, in August 1688, that the laborat of the College should be accommodated to the preparation of medicines, another room prepared for their reception; and that the contributors to expence should manage the Charity.

It was now expected that the Apothecaries would have undertaken care of providing medicines: but they took another course. Thinking whole design pernicious to their interest they endeavoured to raise a fact

gainst it in the College, and found some physicians mean enough to solicit heir patronage, by betraying to them the counsels of the College. The reater part, however, enforced by a new edict, in 1694, the former order f 1687, and sent it to the mayor and aldermen, who appointed a committee to treat with the College, and settle the mode of administering the harity.

It was desired by the aldermen, that the testimonials of churchwardens and verseers should be admitted; and that all hired servants, and all apprentices o handicraftsmen should be considered as *poor*. This likewise was granted y the College.

It was then considered who should distribute the medicines, and who should ade their prices. The Physicians procured some apothecaries to undertake he dispensation, and offered that the Warden and Company of the apothearies should adjust the price. This offer was rejected; and the apothecaries who had engaged to assist the charity were considered as traytors to the company, threatened with the imposition of troublesome offices, and deterred rom the performance of their engagements. The apothecaries ventured pon public opposition, and presented a kind of remonstrance against the deign to the committee of the city, which the physicians condescended to conide: and at least the traders seem to have prevailed among the sons of trade; or the proposal of the college having been considered, a paper of approbaion was drawn up, but postponed and forgotten.

The physicians still persisted; and in 1696 a subscription was raised by themselves, according to an agreement prefixed to the Dispensary. The poor were for a time supplied with medicines: for how long a time, I know not. The medicinal charity, like others, began with ardour, but soon remitted, and at last died gradually away.

About the time of the subscription begins the action of the *Dispensary*. The Poem, as its subject was present and popular, co-operated with passions and prejudices then prevalent, and, with such auxiliaries to its intrinsick merit, was universally and liberally applauded. It was on the side of charity against the intrigues of interest, and of regular learning against licentious usurpation of medical authority, and was therefore naturally favoured by those who read and can judge of poetry.

In 1697, Garth spoke that which is now called the *Harveian* Oration; which the authors of the Biographia mention with more praise than the passage quoted in their notes will fully justify. Garth, speaking of the mischiefs done by quacks, has these expressions: "Non tamen telis vulnerat ista agyr-'tarum coluvies, sed theriacâ quadam magis perniciosa, non pyrio, sed pul-'vere nescio quo exotico certat, non globulis plumbeis, sed pilulis æque 'lethalibus interficit." This was certainly thought fine by the author, and

is still admired by his biographer. In October 1702 he became one of the censors of the College.

Garth, being an active and zealous Whig, was a member of the Kit-cat club, and by consequence familiarly known to all the great men of that denomination. In 1710, when the government fell into other hands, he writ to lord Godolphin, on his dismission, a short poem, which was criticised in the *Examiner*, and so successfully either defended or excused by Mr. Addison, that, for the sake of the vindication, it ought to be preserved.

At the accession of the present Family his merits were acknowledged and rewarded. He was knighted with the sword of his hero, Marlborough; and was made physician in ordinary to the king, and physician-general to the army.

He then undertook an addition of Ovid's Metamorphoses, translated by several hands; which he recommended by a Preface, written with more ostentation than ability: his notions are half-formed, and his materials immethodically confused. This was his last work. He died Jan. 18, 1717-18 and was buried at Harrow-on-the-Hill.

His personal character seems to have been social and liberal. He communicated himself through a very wide extent of acquaintance; and though firm in a party, at a time when firmness included virulence, yet he imparted his kindness to those who were not supposed to favour his principles. He was an early encourager of Pope, and was at once the friend of Addison and of Grenville. He is accused of voluptuousness and irreligion; and Pope who says that "if ever there was a good Christian, without knowing himself "to be so, it was Dr. Garth," seems not able to deny what he is angry to hear and loth to confess.

Pope afterwards declared himself convinced that Garth died in the communion of the Church of Rome, having been privately reconciled. It is observed by Lowth, that there is less distance than is thought between scepticism and popery, and that a mind, wearied with perpetual doubt, willingly seeks repose in the bosom of an infallible church.

His poetry has been praised at least equally to its merit. In the *Dispensary* there is a strain of smooth and free versification; but few lines are eminently elegant. No passages fall below mediocrity, and few rise much above it. The plan seems formed without just proportion to the subject; the means and end have no necessary connection. *Resnal*, in his Preface to *Pope*'s Essay, remarks, that Garth exhibits no discrimination of characters; and that what any one says might with equal propriety have been said by another. The general design is perhaps open to criticism; but the composition can seldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never slumbers in sel

self-indulgence; his full vigour is always exerted; scarce a line is left unfinished, nor is it easy to find an expression used by constraint, or a thought imperfectly expressed. It was remarked by Pope, that the *Dispensary* had been corrected in every edition, and that every change was an improvement. It appears, however, to want something of poetical ardour, and something of general delectation; and therefore, since it has been no longer supported by accidental and extrinsick popularity, it has been scarcely able to support itself.

ROWE.

# ROWE.

NICHOLAS ROWE was born at Little Beckford in Bedfordshire, in 1673. His family had long possessed a considerable estate, with a good house, at Lambertoun* in Devonshire. The ancestor from whom he descended in a direct line received the arms borne by his descendants for his bravery in the Holy War. His father, John Rowe, who was the first that quitted his paternal acres to practise any art of profit, professed the law, and published Benlow's and Dallison's Reports in the Reign of James the Second, when, in opposition to the notions then diligently propagated, of dispensing power, he ventured to remark how low his authors rated the prerogative. He was made a serjeant, and died April 30, 1692. He was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was first sent to a private school at Highgate; and being afterward removed to Westminster, was at twelve years† chosen one of the King's scholars. His master was Busby, who suffered none of his scholars to let their powers lie useless; and his exercises in several languages are said to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have cost him very little labour.

At sixteen he had, in his father's opinion, made advances in learning sufficient to qualify him for the study of law, and was entered a student of the Middle Temple, where for some time he read statutes and reports with proficiency proportionate to the force of his mind, which was already such that he endeavoured to comprehend law, not as a series of precedents, or collection of positive precepts, but as a system of rational government, and impartial justice.

When he was nineteen, he was by the death of his father left more to his own direction, and probably from that time suffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced *The Ambitious Stepmother*, which was received with so much favour, that he devoted himself from that time wholly to elegant literature.

His next tragedy (1702) was *Tamerlane*, in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characterize king William, and Lewis the Fourteenth under Bajazet. The virtues of Tamerlane seem to have been arbitrarily assigned him by his poet, for I know not that history gives any other qualities than those which make a conqueror. The fashion, however, of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raise horror and detestation; and whatever

* In the Villare. *Lamerton.* Orig. Edit.

† He was not elected till 1688. N.

latever good was with-held from him, that it might not be thrown away, is bestowed upon king William.

This was the tragedy which Rowe valued most, and that which probably r the help of political auxiliaries, excited most applause; but occasional oetry must often content itself with occasional praise. Tamerlane has for a ng time been acted only once a year, on the night when king William nded. Our quarrel with Lewis has been long over, and it now gratifies ither zeal nor malice to see him painted with aggravated features, like a lantern upon a sign.

The *Fair Penitent*, his next production (1703) is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its turns of appearing, and probably ill long keep them, for there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable, and so delightful by the language. The story is domestick, and therefore easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or spritely as occaion requires.

The character of *Lothario* seems to have been expanded by Richardson into *ovelace*; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. *othario*, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be espised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power f Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation, to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, elegance, and ourage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.

The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhausted, and little remains but to talk of what is past. It has been observed, that the title of the play does not sufficiently correspond with the behaviour of Calista, who at last shews no evident signs of repentance, but may be reasonably suspected of feeling pain from detection rather than from guilt, and expresses more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.

His next (1706) was *Ulysses*; which, with the common fate of mythological stories, is now generally neglected. We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes, to expect any pleasure from their revival: to shew them as they have already been shewn, is to disgust by repetition; to give them new qualities, or new adventures, is to offend by violating received notions.

The *Royal Convert* (1708) seems to have a better claim to longevity. The fable is drawn from an obscure and barbarous age, to which fictions are more easily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly seen, they easily take forms from imagination. The scene lies among our ancestors in our own country, and therefore very easily catches attention. *Rodogune* is a personage truly tragical, of high spirit, and violent passions, great with tempestuous dignity, and wicked with a soul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. The motto seems to tell that this play was not successful.

Rowe

Rowe does not always remember what his characters require. In *Tamerlane* there is some ridiculous mention of the God of Love; and Rodogune, a savage Saxon, talks of Venus, and the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter.

This play discovers its own date, by a prediction of the *Union*, in imitation of Cranmer's prophetick promises to *Henry the Eighth*. The anticipated blessings of union are not very naturally introduced, nor very happily expressed.

He once (1706) tried to change his hand. He ventured on a comedy, and produced the *Biter*; with which, though it was unfavourably treated by the audience, he was himself delighted; for he is said to have sat in the house, laughing with great vehemence, whenever he had in his own opinion produced a jest. But finding that he and the publick had no sympathy of mirth, he tried at lighter scenes no more.

After the Royal Convert (1714) appeared *Jane Shore*, written, as its author professes, *in imitation of Shakespear's style*. In what he thought himself an imitator of Shakespeare, it is not easy to conceive. The numbers, the diction, the sentiments, and the conduct, every thing in which imitation can consist, are remote in the utmost degree from the manner of Shakespeare; whose dramas it resembles only as it is an English story, and as some of the persons have their names in history. This play, consisting chiefly of domestic scenes and private distress, lays hold upon the heart. The wife is forgiven because she repents, and the husband is honoured because he forgives. This, therefore, is one of those pieces which we still welcome on the stage.

His last tragedy (1715) was *Lady Jane Grey*. This subject had been chosen by Mr. Smith, whose papers were put into Rowe's hands such as he describes them in his preface. This play has likewise sunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the stage.

Being by a competent fortune exempted from any necessity of combating his inclination, he never wrote in distress, and therefore does not appear to have ever written in haste. His works were finished to his own approbation, and bear few marks of negligence or hurry. It is remarkable, that his prologues and epilogues are all his own, though he sometimes supplied others; he afforded help, but did not solicit it.

As his studies necessarily made him acquainted with Shakespeare, and acquaintance produced veneration, he undertook (1709) an edition of his works, from which he neither received much praise, nor seems to have expected it; yet, I believe, those who compare it with former copies will find that he has done more than he promised; and that, without the pomp of notes or boasts of criticism, many passages are happily restored. He prefixed a life of the author, such as tradition then almost expiring could supply, and a preface*; which cannot be said to discover much profundity or penetration. He at least contributed to the popularity of his author.

He

* Mr. Rowe's Preface, however, is not distinct, as it might be supposed from this passage from the Life.

He was willing enough to improve his fortune by other arts than poetry. He was under secretary for three years when the duke of Queensberry was secretary of state, and afterwards applied to the earl of Oxford for some publick employment *. Oxford enjoined him to study Spanish; and when, some time afterwards, he came again, and said that he had mastered it, dismissed him with this congratulation, "Then, Sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading "Don Quixote in the original."

This story is sufficiently attested; but why Oxford, who desired to be thought a favourer of literature, should thus insult a man of acknowledged merit; or how Rowe, who was so keen a Whig † that he did not willingly converse with men of the opposite party, could ask preferment from Oxford; it is not now possible to discover. Pope, who told the story, did not say on what occasion the advice was given; and, though he owned Rowe's disappointment, doubted whether any injury was intended him, but thought it rather Lord Oxford's odd way.

It is likely that he lived on discontented through the rest of queen Anne's reign; but the time came at last when he found kinder friends. At the accession of king George he was made poet laureat; I am afraid by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint, where he was forced to seek shelter by extreme poverty. He was made likewise one of the land surveyors of the customs of the port of London. The prince of Wales chose him clerk of his council; and the lord chancellor Parker, as soon as he received the seals, appointed him, unasked, secretary of the presentations. Such an accumulation of employments undoubtedly produced a very considerable revenue.

Having already translated some parts of *Lucan's Pharsalia*, which had been published in the Miscellanies, and doubtless received many praises, he undertook a version of the whole work, which he lived to finish, but not to publish. It seems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood, who prefixed the author's life, in which is contained the following character.

"As to his person, it was graceful and well made; his face regular, and of "a manly beauty. As his soul was well-lodged, so its rational and animal fa- "culties excelled in a high degree. He had a quick and fruitful invention, a "deep penetration, and a large compass of thought, with singular dexterity "and easiness in making his thoughts to be understood. He was master of "most parts of polite learning, especially the classical authors, both Greek "and Latin; understood the French, Italian, and Spanish languages; and "spoke the first fluently, and the other two tolerably well.



* Spence. † Spence.

" He had likewise read most of the Greek and Roman histories in their " original languages, and most that are wrote in English, French, Italian, " and Spanish. He had a good taste in philosophy; and, having a firm im- " pression of religion upon his mind, he took great delight in divinity and " ecclesiastical history, in both which he made great advances in the times " he retired into the country, which was frequent. He expressed, on all " occasions, his full persuasion of the truth of Revealed Religion; and being " a sincere member of the established church himself, he pitied, but condemn- " ed not, those that dissented from it. He abhorred the principles of perse- " cuting men upon the account of their opinions in religion; and being strict " in his own, he took it not upon him to censure those of another persuasion. " His conversation was pleasant, witty, and learned, without the least tinc- " ture of affectation or pedantry; and his inimitable manner of diverting and " enlivening the company made it impossible for any one to be out of humour " when he was in it. Envy and detraction seemed to be entirely foreign to his " constitution; and whatever provocations he met with at any time, he passed " them over without the least thought of resentment or revenge. As Homer " had a Zoilus, so Mr. Rowe had sometimes his: for there were not want- " ing malevolent people, and pretenders to poetry too, that would now and " then bark at his best performances; but he was so much conscious of his " own genius, and had so much good nature, as to forgive them; nor could " he ever be tempted to return them an answer.

" The love of learning and poetry made him not the less fit for business, " and nobody applied himself closer to it, when it required his attendance. " The late duke of Queensberry, when he was secretary of state, made " him his secretary for public affairs; and when that truly great man came " to know him well, he was never so pleased as when Mr. Rowe was " in his company. After the duke's death, all avenues were stopped to his " preferment; and during the rest of that reign, he passed his time with the " Muses and his books, and sometimes the conversation of his friends.

" When he had just got to be easy in his fortune, and was in a fair way to " make it better, death swept him away, and in him deprived the world of " one of the best men, as well as one of the best geniuses, of the age. " He died like a Christian and a Philosopher, in charity with all man- " kind, and with an absolute resignation to the will of God. He kept up " his good-humour to the last; and took leave of his wife and friends, " immediately before his last agony, with the same tranquillity of mind, and " the same indifference for life, as though he had been upon taking but a " short journey. He was twice married; first to a daughter of Mr. Parsons, " one of the auditors of the revenue; and afterwards to a daughter of Mr. " Devenish, of a good family in Dorsetshire. By the first he had a son; " and by the second a daughter, married afterwards to Mr. Fane. He

" died

"died the sixth of December, 1718, in the forty-fifth year of his age: and "was buried the nineteenth of the same month in Westminster-abbey, in "the aisle where many of our English poets are interred, over-against "Chaucer, his body being attended by a select number of his friends, and "the dean and choir officiating at the funeral."

To this character, which is apparently given with the fondness of a friend, may be added the testimony of Pope, who says, in a letter to Blount, "Mr. "Rowe accompanied me, and passed a week in the Forest. I need not tell "you how much a man of his turn entertained me; but I must acquaint "you, there is a vivacity and gaiety of disposition, almost peculiar to him, "which make it impossible to part from him without that uneasiness which "generally succeeds all our pleasure."

Pope has left behind him another mention of his companion, less advantageous, which is thus reported by Dr. Warburton:

"Rowe, in Mr. Pope's opinion, maintained a decent character, but had "no heart. Mr. Addison was justly offended with some behaviour which "arose from that want, and estranged himself from him; which Rowe "felt very severely. Mr. Pope, their common friend, knowing this, took "an opportunity, at some juncture of Mr. Addison's advancement, to tell "him how poor Rowe was grieved at his displeasure, and what satisfaction "he expressed at Mr. Addison's good fortune, which he expressed so na-"turally, that he (Mr. Pope) could not but think him sincere. Mr. Addi-"son replied, 'I do not suspect that he feigned; but the levity of his "heart is such, that he is struck with any new adventure; and it would "affect him just in the same manner, if he heard I was going to be hang-"ed.'—Mr. Pope said, he could not deny but Mr. Addison understood "Rowe well."

This censure time has not left us the power of confirming or refuting; but observation daily shews, that much stress is not to be laid on hyperbolical accusations, and pointed sentences, which even he that utters them desires to be applauded rather than credited. Addison can hardly be supposed to have meant all that he said. Few characters can bear the microscopick scrutiny of wit quickened by anger; and perhaps the best advice to authors would be, that they should keep out of the way of one another.

Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragick writer and a translator. In his attempt at comedy he failed so ignominiously, that his *Biter* is not inserted in his works; and his occasional poems and short compositions are rarely worthy of either praise or censure; for they seem the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to amuse its leisure than to exercise its powers.

In the construction of his dramas, there is not much art; he is not a nice observer of the Unities. He extends time and varies place as his convenience requires. To vary the place is not, in my opinion, any violation of nature, if the change be made between the acts; for it is no less easy for the spectator to suppose himself at Athens in the second act, than at Thebes in the first; but to change the scene, as is done by Rowe, in the middle of an act, is to add more acts to the play, since an act is so much of the business as is transacted without interruption. Rowe, by this licence, easily extricates himself from difficulties; as in *Jane Grey*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of publick execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no sooner has *Jane* pronounced some prophetick rhymes, than—pass and be gone—the scene closes, and *Pembroke* and *Gardiner* are turned out upon the stage.

I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discriminations of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always seen and heard with pity. *Alicia* is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow or to natural madness.

Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either pity or terrour, but he often elevates the sentiments; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

His translation of the *Golden Verses*, and of the first book of *Quillet's* Poem, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verses* are tedious.

The version of *Lucan* is one of the greatest productions of English poetry; for there is perhaps none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original. *Lucan* is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophick dignity, rather, as Quintilian observes, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences, comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His author's sense is sometimes a little diluted by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are to be expected in all translations, from the constraint of measures and dissimilitude of language. The *Pharsalia* of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed.

ADDISON

# ADDISON.

SEPH ADDISON was born on the first of May, 1672, at Milston, of hich his father, Lancelot Addison, was then rector, near Ambrosebury iltshire, and appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was christened the day. After the usual domestic education, which, from the character s father, may be reasonably supposed to have given him strong impres- of piety, he was committed to the care of Mr. Naish at Ambrosebury fterwards of Mr. Taylor at Salisbury.

t to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature, is d of historical fraud, by which honest fame is injuriously diminished: ıld therefore trace him through the whole process of his education. In , in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father, being made dean of field, naturally carried his family to his new residence, and, I believe, d him for some time, probably not long, under Mr Shaw, then master e school at Litchfield, father of the late Dr. Peter Shaw. Of this in- his biographers have given no account, and I know it only from a of a *barring-out*, told me, when I was a boy, by Andrew Corbet of pshire, who had heard it from Mr. Pigot his uncle.

e practice of *barring-out* was a savage licence, practised in many ls to the end of the last century, by which the boys, when the periodi- ıcation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, some before the time of regular recess, took possession of the school, of ı they barred the doors, and bade their master defiance from the win-

It is not easy to suppose that on such occasions the master would do than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often struggled hard ce or surprise the garrison. The master when Pigot was a school-boy, *ırred-out* at Litchfield, and the whole operation, as he said, was plann- d conducted by Addison.

judge better of the probability of this story, I have enquired when he ent to the Chartreux; but, as he was not one of those who enjoyed the der's benefaction, there is no account preserved of his admission. At hool of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Salisbury

Salisbury or Litchfield, he pursued his juvenile studies under the care of Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have so effectually recorded.

Of this memorable friendship the greater praise must be given to Steele. It is not hard to love those from whom nothing can be feared; and Addison never considered Steele as a rival; but Steele lived as he confesses, under an habitual subjection to the predominating genius of Addison, whom he always mentioned with reverence, and treated with obsequiousness.

Addison *, who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to shew it, by playing a little upon his admirer; but he was in no danger of retort: his jests were endured without resistance or resentment.

But the sneer of jocularity was not the worst. Steele, whose imprudence of generosity, or vanity of profusion, kept him always incurably necessitous, upon some pressing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed an hundred pounds of his friend, probably without much purpose of re-payment; but Addison, who seems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great sensibility the obduracy of his creditor; but with emotions of sorrow rather than of anger †.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, afterwards provost of Queen's College; by whose recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that society denominates those which are elsewhere called Scholars; young men, who partake of the founder's benefaction, and succeed in their order to vacant fellowships ‡.

Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions, which are indeed entitled to particular praise. He has not confined himself to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his style from the general language, such as a diligent perusal of the productions of different ages happened to supply.

His Latin compositions seem to have had much of his fondness; for he collected a second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, perhaps for a convenient receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces are inserted, and where his Poem on the Peace has the first place. He afterwards presented the collection to

* Spence.

† This fact was communicated to Johnson in my hearing by a person of unquestionable veracity, but whose name I am not at liberty to mention. He had it, as he told us, from Lady Primrose, to whom Steele related it with tears in his eyes. The late Dr. Sclater confirmed it to me, by saying, that he had heard it from Mr. Hooke, author of the Roman History; and he from Mr. Pope. H.

See Victor's Letters, vol. I. p. 328. this transaction somewhat differently related. E.

‡ He took the degree of M. A. Feb. 14, 1693.

Boileau,

boileau, who from that time "conceived," says Tickell, "an opinion of the English genius for poetry." Nothing is better known of Boileau, than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of Modern Latin, and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon subjects on which perhaps he would not have ventured to have written in his own language. *The battle of the Pigmies and Cranes; The Barometer;* and *a Bowling-green.* When the matter is low or scanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean because nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and by the sonorous magnificence of Roman syllables, the writer conceals penury of thought, and want of novelty, often from the reader, and often from himself.

In his twenty-second year he first shewed his power of English poetry, by some verses addressed to Dryden; and soon afterwards published a translation of the greater part of the Fourth Georgick upon Bees; after which, says Dryden, "my latter swarm is hardly worth the hiving."

About the same time he composed the arguments prefixed to the several books of Dryden's Virgil; and produced an Essay on the Georgicks, juvenile, superficial, and uninstructive, without much either of the scholar's learning or the critick's penetration.

His next paper of verses contained a character of the principal English poets, inscribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verses *; as is shewn by his version of a small part of Virgil's Georgicks, published in the Miscellanies, and a Latin encomium on queen Mary, in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*. These verses exhibit all the fondness of friendship; but on one side or the other, friendship was afterwards too weak for the malignity of faction.

In this poem is a very confident and discriminative character of Spenser, whose work he had then never read †. So little sometimes is criticism the effect of judgement. It is necessary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Congreve to Montague, then Chancellor of the

* A letter which I found among Dr. Johnson's papers, dated in January 1784, from a Lady in Wiltshire, contains a discovery of some importance in literary history, viz. that by the initials H. S. prefixed to this poem, we are not to understand the famous Dr. Henry Sacheverell, whose trial is the most remarkable incident in his life. The information thus communicated is, that the verses in question were not an address to the famous Dr. Sacheverell, but to a very ingenious gentleman of the same name, who died young, supposed to be a Manksman, for that he wrote the History of the Isle of Man.—That this person left his papers to Mr Addison, and had formed a plan of a tragedy upon the death of Socrates.—The lady says, she had this information from a Mr. Stephens, who was a fellow of Merton College, a contemporary, and intimate with Mr. Addison in Oxford, who died near 50 years ago, a prebendary of Winchester.

† Spence.

Exchequer;

Exchequer: Addison was then learning the trade of a courtier, and subjo ed Montagué as a poetical name to those of Cowley and of Dryden.

By the influence of Mr. Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, w his natural modesty, he was diverted from his original design of enter into holy orders. Montague alledged the corruption of men who engage civil employments without liberal education; and declared, that, though was represented as an enemy to the Church, he would never do it any inj but by withholding Addison from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to king William, with a rhyming troduction addressed to lord Sommers. King William had no regard to e gance or literature; his study was only war; yet by a choice of ministe whose disposition was very different from his own, he procured, without inte tion, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addison was caressed both Sommers and Montague.

In 1697 appeared his Latin verses on the peace of Ryswick, which he c dicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith "the b "Latin poem since the Æneid." Praise must not be too rigorously exami ed; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant.

Having yet no public employment; he obtained (in 1699), a pension three hundred pounds a-year, that he might be enabled to travel. He sta a year at Blois *, probably to learn the French language; and then proce ed in his journey to Italy, which he surveyed with the eyes of a poet.

While he was travelling at leisure, he was far from being idle; for he n only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write l Dialogues on Medals, and four Acts of Cato. Such at least is the relati of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials, and formed l plan.

Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the lett to lord Halifax, which is justly considered as the most elegant, if not t most sublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he fou it necessary to hasten home; being, as Swift informs us, distressed by ind gence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling Squire, becau his pension was not remitted.

At his return he published his Travels, with a dedication to lord Sommer As his stay in foreign countries was short, his observations are such as mig be supplied by a hasty view, and consist chiefly in comparisons of the prese face of the country with the descriptions left us by the Roman poets, fro whom he made preparatory collections, though he might have spared t trouble, had he known that such collections had been made twice before l Italian authors.

* Spence.

Tl

ost amusing passage of his book is his account of the minute repub-
an Marino; of many parts it is not a very severe censure to say
might have been written at home. His elegance of language, and
n of prose and verse, however, gains upon the reader; and the
ough a while neglected, became in time so much the favourite of
ck, that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price.

he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanness of appearance
ive testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he
old patrons out of power, and was, therefore, for a time, at full
r the cultivation of his mind, and a mind so cultivated gives reason
: that little time was lost.

: remained not long neglected or useless. The victory at Blenheim
pread triumph and confidence over the nation; and lord Godolphin,
g to lord Halifax, that it had not been celebrated in a manner
he subject, desired him to propose it to some better poet. Halifax
, that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthless
: unprofitably enriched with publick money, without any care to
mploy those whose appearance might do honour to their country.
Godolphin replied, that such abuses should in time be rectified;
if a man could be found capable of the task then proposed, he
it want an ample recompense. Halifax then named Addison, but
that the Treasurer should apply to him in his own person. Godol-
the message by Mr. Boyle, afterwards lord Carlton; and Addison
ndertaken the work, communicated it to the Treasurer, while it
dvanced no further than the simile of the Angel, and was imme-
warded by succeeding Mr. Locke in the place of *Commissioner*
*ls*.

following year he was at Hanover with lord Halifax; and the year
was made under-secretary of State, first to Sir Charles Hedges,
ew months more to the earl of Sunderland.

this time the prevalent taste for Italian operas inclined him to try
uld be the effect of a musical Drama in our own language. He
wrote the opera of Rosamond, which, when exhibited on the
is either hissed or neglected; but trusting that the readers would
nore justice, he published it, with an inscription to the dutchess of
ough; a woman without skill, or pretentions to skill, in poetry or
. His dedication was therefore an instance of servile absurdity,
ceded only by Joshua Barnes's dedication of a Greek Anacreon to
:.

putation had been somewhat advanced by *The Tender Husband*, a
which Steele dedicated to him, with a confession that he owed to

 him

him several of the most successful scenes. To this play Addison supplied a prologue.

When the marquis of Wharton was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his secretary; and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a salary of three hundred pounds a-year. The office was little more than nominal, and the salary was augmented for his accommodation.

Interest and faction allow little to the operation of particular dispositions, or private opinions. Two men of personal characters more opposite than those of Wharton and Addison, could not easily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and shameless, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right or wrong; whatever is contrary to this, may be said of Addison; but as agents of a party they were connected, and how they adjusted their other sentiments we cannot know.

Addison must however not be too hastily condemned. It is not necessary to refuse benefits from a bad man, when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes; nor has the subordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of those under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the instrument of wickedness. It is reasonable to suppose that Addison counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blasting influence of the Lieutenant, and that at least by his intervention some good was done, and some mischief prevented.

When he was in office, he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends: "For," said he, "I may have a hundred friends; and, if my fee be two guineas, I "shall by relinquishing my right, lose two hundred guineas, and no friend "gain more than two; there is therefore no proportion between the good "imparted and the evil suffered."

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of the Tatler: but he was not long concealed: by inserting a remark on Virgil, which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. It is indeed not easy for any man to write upon literature, or common life, so as not to make himself known to those with whom he familiarly converses, and who are acquainted with his track of study, his favourite topick, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phrases.

If Steele desired to write in secret, he was not lucky; a single month detected him. His first Tatler was published April 12 (1709), and Addison's contribution appeared May 26. Tickell observes, that the Tatler began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtless literally true; but the work did not suffer much by his unconsciousness of its commencement,

ment, or his absence at its cessation; for he continued his assistance to December 23, and the paper stopped on January 2. He did not distinguish his pieces by any signature; and I know not whether his name was not kept secret, till the papers were collected into volumes.

To the Tatler, in about two months, succeeded the Spectator; a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, upon a more regular plan, and published daily. Such an undertaking shewed the writers not to distrust their own copiousness of materials or facility of composition, and their performance justified their confidence. They found, however, in their progress, many auxiliaries. To attempt a single paper was no terrifying labour; many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addison had enough of the zeal of party, but Steele had at that time almost nothing else. The Spectator, in one of the first papers, shewed the political tenets of its authors; but a resolution was soon taken, of courting general approbation by general topicks, and subjects on which faction had produced no diversity of sentiments; such as literature, morality and familiar life. To this practice they adhered with few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praise of Marlborough; and when Dr. Fleetwood prefixed to some sermons a preface, overflowing with whiggish opinions, that it might be read by the Queen *, it was reprinted in the Spectator.

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily conversation, to correct those depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove those grievances, which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation, was first attempted by Casa in his book of *Manners*, and Castiglione in his *Courtier*; two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now less read, are neglected only because they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their usefulness to the age in which they were written is sufficiently attested by the translations which almost all the nations of Europe were in haste to obtain.

This species of instruction was continued, and perhaps advanced by the French; among whom La Bruyere's Manners of the Age, though, as Boileau remarked, it is written without connection, certainly deserves praise, for liveliness of description, and justness of observation.

Before the Tatler and Spectator, if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet

* This particular number of the Spectator, it is said, was not published till 12 o'clock, that it might come out precisely at the hour of her Majesty's breakfast, and that no time might be left for deliberating about serving it up with that meal, as usual. See edit. of the TATLER with notes, vol. VI. No. 271, *note*. p. 452, &c. N.

unde: taken

undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect, or the impertinence of civility; to shew when to speak, or to be silent; how to refuse or how to comply. We had many books to teach us our more important duties, and to settle opinions in philosophy or politicks; but an *Arbiter elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from thorns and prickles, which teaze the passer, though they do not wound him.

To this purpose nothing is so proper as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience.

This mode of conveying cheap and easy knowledge began among us in the Civil War*, when it was much the interest of either party to raise and fix the prejudices of the people. At that that time appeared Mercurius Aulicus, Mercurius Rusticus, and Mercurius Civicus. It is said, that when any title grew popular, it was stolen by the antagonist, who by this stratagem conveyed his notions to those who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of those unhappy days left scarcely any man leisure to treasure up occasional compositions; and so much were they neglected, that a complete collection is no where to be found.

These Mercuries were succeeded by L'Estrange's Observator, and that by Lesley's Rehearsal, and perhaps by others; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people, in this commodious manner, but controversy relating to the Church or State; of which they taught many to talk, whom they could not teach to judge.

It has been suggested, that the Royal Society was instituted soon after the Restoration, to divert the attention of the people from public discontent.

The Tatler and Spectator had the same tendency; they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political contest, they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflections; and it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolick and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect which they can never wholly lose, while they

* Newspapers appear to have had an earlier date than here assigned. Cleiveland, in his Character of a London Diurnal, says, "The original sinner of this kind was Dutch; Gallo-Belgicus the Protopias, and the Modern Mercuries but Hans en Kelder." Some intelligence given by Mercurius Gallo-Belgicus is mentioned in Carew's Survey of Cornwall, p. 126. originally published in 1602. These vehicles of information are often mentioned in the plays of James and Charles the first. E.

continue

to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in
nces of knowledge.

Tatler and Spectator adjusted, like Casa, the unsettled practice of
ercourse by propriety and politeness; and, like La Bruyère, exhi-
: *Characters and Manners of the Age.* The personages introduced in
pers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conspi-
various stations. Of the Tatler this is told by Steele in his last
nd of the Spectator by Budgell in the Preface to Theophrastus, a
ich Addison has recommended, and which he was suspected to have
if he did not write it. Of those portraits, which may be supposed
netimes embellished, and sometimes aggravated, the originals are
tly known, and partly forgotten.

say that they united the plans of two or three eminent writers, is
hem but a small part of their due praise; they superadded literature
cism, and sometimes towered far above their predecessors; and
with great justness of argument and dignity of language, the most
it duties and sublime truths.

ese topicks were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined alle-
and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of
n.

ecorded by Budgell, that of the characters feigned or exhibited in
ctator, the favourite of Addison was Sir Roger de Coverley, of
e had formed a very delicate and discriminated idea, which he would
r to be violated; and therefore when Steele had shewn him inno-
icking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a tavern, he drew
mself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to
him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

eason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para
acio Don Quixote, y yo para el*, made Addison declare, with an undue
ce of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion
y were born for one another, and that any other hand would do
ng.

y be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation.
ribes his Knight as having his imagination somewhat warped; but of
ersion he has made very little use. The irregularities in Sir Roger's
seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten
life, by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of
rusticity, and that negligence which solitary grandeur naturally ge-

variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient mad-
hich from time to time cloud reason, without eclipsing it, it requires
nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from
ting his own design.

To

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently exprest, an adherent to the landed interest, is opposed Sir Andrew Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the moneyed interest, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more consequences were at first intended, than could be produced when the resolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little seems not to have pleased Addison, who, when he dismissed him from the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true spirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he "would not build "an hospital for idle people;" but at last he buys land, settles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hospital for twelve old husbandmen, for men with whom a merchant has little acquaintance, and whom he commonly considers with little kindness.

Of essays thus elegant, thus instructive, and thus commodiously distributed, it is natural to suppose the approbation general, and the sale numerous. I once heard it observed, that the sale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the last number to produce more than twenty pounds a week, and therefore stated at one and twenty pounds, or three pounds ten shillings a day: this, at a half-penny a paper, will give sixteen hundred and eighty* for the daily number.

This sale is not great; yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow less; for he declares that the Spectator, whom he ridicules for his endless mention of the *fair sex*, had before his recess wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which Cato came upon the stage, was the grand climacterick of Addison's reputation. Upon the death of Cato, he had, as is said, planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for several years the four first acts finished, which were shewn to such as were likely to spread their admiration. They were seen by Pope, and by Cibber, who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in the despicable cant of literary modesty, that, whatever spirit his friend had shewn in the composition, he doubted whether he would have courage sufficient to expose it to the censure of a British audience.

The time however was now come, when those, who affected to think liberty in danger, affected likewise to think that a stage-play might preserve it: and Addison was importuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain to shew his courage and his zeal by finishing his design.

To resume his work he seemed perversely and unaccountably unwilling; and by a request, which perhaps he wished to be denied, desired Mr. Hughes

* That this calculation is not exaggerated, that it is even much below the real number, see the notes on the Tatler, ed. 1786, Vol. VI. p. 452. N.

to

to add a fifth act. Hughes supposed him serious; and, undertaking the supplement, brought in a few days some scenes for his examination; but he had in the mean time gone to work himself, and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly disproportionate to the foregoing parts: like a task performed with reluctance, and hurried to its conclusion.

It may yet be doubted whether Cato was made publick by any change of the author's purpose; for Dennis charged him with raising prejudices in his own favour by false positions of preparatory criticism, and with *poisoning the town* by contradicting in the Spectator the established rule of poetical justice, because his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we must guess.

Addison was, I believe, sufficiently disposed to bar all avenues against all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were these words, "Britons arise, be worth like "this approved;" meaning nothing more than, Britons, erect and exalt yourselves to the approbation of publick virtue. Addison was frighted, lest he should be thought a promoter of insurrection, and the line was liquidated to "Britons, attend."

Now, "heavily in clouds came on the day, the great, the important "day," when Addison was to stand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little hazard as was possible, on the first night Steele, as himself relates, undertook to pack an audience. This, says Pope*, had been tried for the first time in favour of the Distrest Mother; and was now, with more efficacy, practised for Cato.

The danger was soon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to shew that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of Liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, says Pope, design a second present, when they can accompany it with as good a sentence.

The play, supported thus by the emulation of factious praise, was acted night after night a longer time than, I believe, the publick had allowed to any drama before; and the author, as Mrs. Porter long afterwards related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the scenes with restless and unappeasable solicitude.

When it was printed, notice was given that the Queen would be pleased if it was dedicated to her; "but, as he had designed that compliment

* Spence.

"elsewhere,

" elsewhere, he found himself obliged," says Tickell, " by his duty
" one hand, and his honour on the other, to send it into the world w
" any dedication."

Human happiness has always its abatements; the brightest sun-sh success is not without a cloud. No sooner was Cato offered to the than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis, with all the vi of angry criticism. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably temper more furious than Addison, for what they call liberty, and t a flatterer of the Whig ministry, could not sit quiet at a successful pla was eager to tell friends and enemies that they had misplaced their ad tions. The world was too stubborn for instruction; with the fate censurer of Corneille's Cid, his animadversions shewed his anger w effect, and Cato continued to be praised.

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendship of Addis vilifying his old enemy, and could give resentment its full play withc pearing to revenge himself. He therefore published *A Narrative of th ness of John Dennis*; a performance which left the objections to th in their full force, and therefore discovered more desire of vexing the than of defending the poet.

Addison, who was no stranger to the world, probably saw the selfi of Pope's friendship; and, resolving that he should have the conseq of his officiousness to himself, informed Dennis by Steele, that he wa for the insult; and that, whenever he should think fit to answer his re he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected.

The greatest weakness of the play is in the scenes of love, whi said by Pope * to have been added to the original plan upon a subsequ view, in compliance with the popular practice of the stage. Such thority it is hard to reject; yet the love is so intimately mingled wi whole action, that it cannot easily be thought extrinsick and advent for if it were taken away, what would be left? or how were the fo filled in the first draught?

At the publication the Wits seemed proud to pay their attendanc encomiastick verses. The best are from an unknown hand, which w haps lose somewhat of their praise when the author is known to b freys.

Cato had yet other honours. It was censured as a party-play by a *of Oxford*, and defended in a favourable examination by Dr. Sew was translated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence; and by t suits of St. Omer's into Latin, and played by their pupils. Of this a copy was sent to Mr. Addison: it is to be wished that it could be for the sake of comparing their version of the soliloquy with that of

* Spence.

At

A tragedy was written on the same subject by Des Champs, a French poet, which was translated, with a criticism on the English play. But the translator and the critick are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanswered, and therefore little read; Addison knew the policy of literature too well to make his enemy important by drawing the attention of the public upon a criticism, which, though sometimes intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While Cato was upon the stage, another daily paper, called *The Guardian*, was published by Steele. To this, Addison gave great assistance, whether occasionally or by previous engagement is not known.

The character of Guardian was too narrow and too serious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and the decencies of life, but seemed not to include literary speculations, and was in some degree violated by merriment and burlesque. What had the Guardian of the Lizards to do with hubs of tall or of little men, with nests of ants, or with Strada's prolusions?

Of this paper nothing is necessary to be said, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the Spectator, with the same elegance, and the same variety, till some unlucky sparkle from a Tory paper set Steele's politicks on fire, and wit at once blazed into faction. He was soon too hot for neutral topicks, and quitted the *Guardian* to write the *Englishman*.

The papers of Addison are marked in the Spectator by one of the Letters in the name of *Clio*, and in the Guardian by *a hand*; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to usurp the praise of others, or as Steele, with far greater likelihood, insinuates, that he could not without discontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not satisfy itself with the air of renown, but that with great eagerness he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of these papers were written with powers truly comick, with nice discrimination of characters, and accurate observations of natural or accidental deviations from propriety; but it was not supposed that he had tried a comedy on the stage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of the *Drummer*; this however Steele did not know to be true by any direct testimony; for when Addison put the play into his hands, he only told him, it was the work of a "Gentleman in the Company;" and when it was received, as is confessed, with cold disapprobation, he was probably less willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection; but the testimony of Steele, and the total silence of any other claimant, has determined the public to assign it to Addison, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried the *Drummer* to the play-house and afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty guineas.

To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof supplied by the play itself, of which the characters are such as Addison would have delineated and the tendency such as Addison would have promoted. That it should have been ill received would raise wonder, did we not daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise.

He was not all this time an indifferent spectator of public affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required (in 1707). *The present State of the War, and the Necessity of an Augmentation*; which, however judicious, being written on temporary topicks, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, laid hold on no attention, and has naturally sunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be said of the few papers entitled *The Whig Examiner*, in which is employed all the force of gay malevolence and humorous satire. Of this paper, which just appeared and expired, Swift remarks with exultation, that "it is "now down among the dead men*." He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, since personal malice is past, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effusions of wit, must wish for more of the *Whig Examiners*; for on no occasion was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear. His *Trial of Count Tariff*, written to expose the Treaty of Commerce with France, lived no longer than the question that produced it.

Not long afterwards, an attempt was made to revive the *Spectator*, at a time indeed by no means favourable to the literature, when the succession of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, discord, and confusion, and either the turbulence of the times, or the satiety of the readers, put a stop to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of those that went before it. Addison produced more than a fourth part; and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his associates. The time that had passed during the suspension of the *Spectator*, though it had not lessened his power of humour, seems to have encreased his disposition to seriousness: the proportion of his religious to his comic papers is greater than in the former series.

The *Spectator*, from its recommencement, was published only three times a week; and no discriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addison Tickell has ascribed twenty-three†.

* From a Tory song in vogue at the time, the burthen whereof is,

And he that will his health deny,
Down among the dead men let him lie. H.

† Numb 556. 557. 558. 559. 561, 562. 565. 567. 568. 569. 571. 574. 575. 579. 580. 582. 583. 584. 585. 592. 598. 600.

The

The *Spectator* had many contributors; and Steele, whose negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to furnish a paper, called loudly for the Letters, of which Addison, whose materials were more, made little use; having recourse to sketches and hints, the product of his former studies, which he now reviewed and completed: among these are named by Tickell the *Essays* on *Wit*, those on the *Pleasures* of the *Imagination*, and the *Criticism* on *Milton*.

When the House of Hanover took possession of the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be suitably rewarded. Before the arrival of King George, he was made secretary to the regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addison, who was overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by choice of expression, that the lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the house, and ordered him to dispatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison.

He was better qualified for the *Freeholder*, a paper which he published twice a week, from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the established government, sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory-Fox-hunter.

There are however some strokes less elegant, and less decent; such as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topick of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuse had been employed by Milton against king Charles II.

"— — — — — — *Jacobæi.*
"Centum exulantis viscera marsupii regis."

And Oldmixon delights to tell of some alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes; but that which might be expected from Milton's savageness, or Oldmixon's meanness was not suitable to the delicacy of Addison.

Steele thought the humour of the *Freeholder* too nice and gentle for such noisy times; and is reported to have said that the ministry made use of a fife, when they should have called for a trumpet.

This year (1716*) he married the countess dowager of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a very long and anxious courtship, perhaps with behaviour not very unlike that of Sir Roger to his disdainful widow; and who, I

* August 2.

am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said have first known her by becoming tutor to her son*. "He formed," Tonson, "the design of getting that lady, from the time when he was "recommended into the family." In what part of his life he obtained recommendation, or how long, and in what manner he lived in the fam I know not. His advances at first were certainly timorous, but grew bo as his reputation and influence increased; till at last the lady was persu to marry him on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is poused, to whom the sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I "thee this man for thy slave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report be credited, made no addition to his happiness; it neither found them made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought self entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her son. R ballad of the *Despairing Shepherd* is said to have been written, either be or after marriage, upon this memorable pair; and it is certain that Adc has left behind him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717), he rose to his highest elevation, being made se tary of state. For this employment he might be justly supposed qualifie long practice of business, and by his regular ascent through other offices; expectation is often disappointed; it is universally confessed that he was equal to the duties of his place. In the house of commons he could speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the government. I office, says Pope†, he could not issue an order without losing his time in c of fine expressions. What he gained in rank, he lost in credit; and, fin by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismission, w pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His friends palliated this relinqu ment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with a count of declining health, and the necesssity of recess and quiet.

He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupation his future life. He purposed a tragedy on the death of Socrates; a stor which, as Tickell remarks, the basis is narrow, and to which I know not love could have been appended. There would however have been no either of virtue in the sentiments, or elegance in the language.

He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Christian Religion*, of w part was published after his death; and he designed to have made a poetical version of the Psalms.

These pious compositions Pope imputed‡ to a selfish motive, upon the dit, as he owns, of Tonson; who having quarrell'd with Addison, and loving him, said, that, when he laid down the secretary's office, he inte

* Spence. † Spence. ‡ Spence.

to take orders, and obtain a bishoprick; "for," said he, "I always thought 'him a priest in his heart."

That Pope should have thought this conjecture of Tonson worth remembrance, is a proof, but indeed so far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained some malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonson pretended not to guess it; no other mortal ever suspected it; and Pope might have reflected, that a man who had been secretary of state, in the ministry of Sunderland, knew a nearer way to a bishoprick than by defending Religion, or translating the Psalms.

It is related that he had once a design to make an English Dictionary, and that he considered Dr. Tillotson as the writer of highest authority. There was formerly sent to me by Mr. Locker, clerk of the Leathersellers Company, who was eminent for curiosity and literature, a collection of examples selected from Tillotson's works, as Locker said, by Addison. It came too late to be of use, so I inspected it but slightly, and remember it indistinctly. I thought the passages too short.

Addison however did not conclude his life in peaceful studies; but relapsed, when he was near his end, to a political dispute.

It so happened that (1718-19) a controversy was agitated with great vehemence between those friends of long continuance, Addison and Steele. It may be asked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cause could set them at variance. The subject of their dispute was of great importance. The earl of Sunderland proposed an act called *The Peerage Bill*; by which the number of Peers should be fixed, and the king restrained from any new creation of nobility, unless when an old family should be extinct. To this the lords would naturally agree; and the king, who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almost indifferent to the possessions of the Crown, had been persuaded to consent. The only difficulty was found among the commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual exclusion of themselves and their posterity. The bill therefore was eagerly opposed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whose speech was published.

The lords might think their dignity diminished by improper advancements, and particularly by the introduction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a majority of Tories in the last reign; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right, with which some time afterwards, by the instigation of Whiggism, the commons, chosen by the people for three years, chose themselves for seven. But, whatever might be the disposition of the lords, the people had no wish to increase their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele observed in a letter to the earl of Oxford, was to introduce an Aristocracy;

tocracy; for a majority in the house of lords, so limited, would have been despotick and irresistable.

To prevent this subversion of the ancient establishment, Steele, whose pen readily seconded his political passions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called *The Plebeian*; to this an answer was published by Addison, under the Title of *The Old Whig*, in which it is not discovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the commons. Steele replied by a second *Plebeian*; and, whether by ignorance or by courtesy, confined himself to his question, without any personal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed against the laws of friendship, or proprieties of decency; but controvertists cannot long retain their kindness for each other. The *Old Whig* answered the *Plebeian*, and could not forbear some contempt of "little *Dicky*, whose trade it was to write pamphlets." Dicky however did not lose his settled veneration for his friend; but contented himself with quoting some lines of Cato, which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aside during that session, and Addison died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred sixty-five to one hundred seventy-seven.

Every reader surely must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years past in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition. Such a controversy was, "Bellum plusquam *civile*," as Lucan expresses it. Why could not faction find other advocates? But, among the uncertainties of the human state, we are doomed to number the instability of friendship.

Of this dispute I have little knowledge but from the *Biographia Britannica*. The *Old Whig* is not inserted in Addison's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his life; why it was omitted, the biographers doubtless give the true reason; the fact was too recent, and those who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The necessity of complying with times, and of sparing persons, is the great impediment of biography. History may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but Lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever. What is known can seldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known. The delicate features of the mind, the nice discriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct, are soon obliterated; and it is surely better that caprice, obstinacy, frolick, and folly, however they might delight in the description, should be silently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unseasonable detection, a pang should be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the process of these narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries,

ontemporaries, I begin to feel myself "walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished," and coming to the time of which it will e proper rather to say "nothing that is false, than all that is true."

The end of this useful life was now approaching.—Addison had for some ime been oppressed by shortness of breath, which was now aggravated by dropsy; and, finding his danger pressing, he prepared to die conformably o his own precepts and professions.

During this lingering decay, he sent, as Pope relates *, a message by the arl of Warwick to Mr. Gay, desiring to see him. Gay, who had not visited him for some time before, obeyed the summons, and found himself eceived with great kindness. The purpose for which the interview had een solicited was then discovered. Addison told him that he had injured him; but that, if he recovered, he would recompence him. What the injury was he did not explain; nor did Gay ever know; but supposed that some preferment designed for him had, by Addison's intervention, been with-held.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions. Addison, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him, but his arguments and expostulations had no effect. One experiment, however, remained to be tried: when he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, "I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die." What effect this awful scene had on the earl, I know not; he likewise died himself in a short time.

In Tickell's excellent Elegy on his friend are these lines:

> He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
> The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.

n which he alludes, as he told Dr. Young, to this moving interview.

Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, nd dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 7, 1719, at Holland-house, leaving no child but a daughter.

Of his virtue it is a sufficient testimony, that the resentment of party as transmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of those who re praised only after death; for his merit was so generally acknowledged, that wift, having observed that his election passed without a contest, adds, that, f he proposed himself for king, he would hardly have been refused.

His zeal for his party did not extinguish his kindness for the merit of is opponents: when he was secretary in Ireland, he refused to intermit is acquaintance with Swift.

* Spence.

Of

Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is so often mentioned as the timorous or sullen taciturnity, which his friends called modesty by too mild a name. Steele mentions with great tenderness "that remarkable bashful-"ness, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit;" and tells us, that "his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties "which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed." Chesterfield affirms, that "Addison was the most timorous and awkward "man that he ever saw." And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself, that, with respect to intellectual wealth, "he could draw bills for a thousand pounds, though he had not a "guinea in his pocket."

That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obstructed and distressed; that he was often oppressed by an improper and ungrateful timidity; every testimony concurs to prove: but Chesterfield's representation is doubtless hyperbolical. That man cannot be supposed very unexpert in the arts of conversation and practice of life, who without fortune or alliance, by his usefulness and dexterity, became secretary of state; and who died at forty-seven, after having not only stood long in the highest rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the most important offices of state.

The time in which he lived had reason to lament his obstinacy of silence: "for he was," says Steele, "above all men in that talent called humour, "and enjoyed it in such perfection, that I have often reflected, after a "night spent with him apart from all the world, that I had had the plea-"sure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, "who had all their wit and nature, heightened with humour more exqui-"site and delightful than any other man ever possessed." This is the fondness of a friend; let us hear what is told us by a rival. "Addison's conversa-"tion *," says Pope, "had something in it more charming than I have "found in any other man. But this was only when familiar: before stran-"gers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff "silence."

This modesty was by no means inconsistent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the first name in modern wit; and with Steele to echoe him, used to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended against them †. There is no reason to doubt that he suffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope's poetical reputation; nor is it without strong reason suspected, that by some disingenuous acts he endeavoured to obstruct it; Pope was not the only man whom he insiduously injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid.

* Spence. † Tonson and Spence.

His

His own powers were such as might have satisfied him with conscious excellence. Of very extensive learning he has indeed given no proofs. He seems to have had small acquaintance with the sciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets his *Dialogues on Medals* shew that he had perused the works with great diligence and skill. The abundance of his own mind left him little indeed of adventitious sentiments; his wit always could suggest what the occasion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation.

What he knew he could easily communicate. "This," says Steele, "was particular in this writer, that, when he had taken his resolution, or made his plan for what he designed to write, he would walk about a room, and dictate it into language with as much freedom and ease as any one could write it down, and attend to the coherence and grammar of what he dictated."

Pope *, who can be less suspected of favouring his memory, declares that he wrote very fluently, but was slow and scrupulous in correcting; that many of his Spectators were written very fast, and sent immediately to the press; and that it seemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much revisal.

"He would alter," says Pope, "any thing to please his friends, before publication; but would not retouch his pieces afterwards: and I believe not one word in Cato, to which I made an objection, was suffered to stand."

The last line of Cato is Pope's, having been originally written

And oh! 'twas this that ended Cato's life.

Pope might have made more objections to the six concluding lines. In the first couplet the words "from hence" are improper; and the second line is taken from Dryden's Virgil. Of the next couplet, the first verse, being included in the second, is therefore useless; and in the third *Discord* is made to produce *Strife*.

Of the course of Addison's familiar day †, before his marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the house with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and colonel Brett. With one or other of these he always breakfasted. He studied all morning; then dined at a tavern; and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a servant in the countess of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addison, kept a coffee-house on the south side of Russel-street, about two doors from Covent-garden. Here it was that the wits

* Spence. † Spence.

of that time used to assemble. It is said, when Addison had suffered any vexation from the countess, he withdrew the company from Button's house.

From the coffee-house he went again to a tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence. It is not unlikely that Addison was first seduced to excess by the manumission which he obtained from the servile timidity of his sober hours. He that feels oppression from the presence of those to whom he knows himself superior, will desire to set loose his powers of conversation; and who, that ever asked succours from Bacchus, was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliaries?

Among those friends it was that Addison displayed the elegance of his colloquial accomplishments, which may easily be supposed such as Pope represents them. The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had passed an evening in his company, declared that he was a parson in a tye-wig, can detract little from his character; he was always reserved to strangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.

From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of sixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promised Congreve and the publick a complete description of his character; but the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers. Steele thought no more on his design, or thought on it with anxiety that at last disgusted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

One slight lineament of his character Swift has preserved. It was his practice, when he found any man invincibly wrong, to flatter his opinions by acquiescence, and sink him yet deeper in absurdity. This artifice of mischief was admired by Stella; and Swift seems to approve her admiration.

His works will supply some information. It appears from his various pictures of the world, that, with all his bashfulness, he had conversed with many distinct classes of men, had surveyed their ways with very diligent observation, and marked with great acuteness the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whose presence nothing reprehensible was out of danger; quick in discerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expose it. "There are," says Steele, "in his writings, many oblique strokes upon some of the wittiest men of the age." His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation; and he detects follies rather than crimes.

If any judgment be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind indeed, less extensive than that of Addison, will shew, that to write, and to live,

re, are very different. Many who praise virtue, do no more than praise

Yet it is reasonable to believe that Addison's professions and practice ere at no great variance, since, amidst that storm of faction in which ost of his life was passed, though his station made him conspicuous, and s activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was ver contradicted by his enemies: of those with whom interest or opinion nited him, he had not only the esteem, but the kindness; and of others, hom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose e love, he retained the reverence.

It is justly observed by Tickell, that he employed wit on the side of virtue nd religion. He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause f reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long conected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. le has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character, "above all Greek, above all Roman fame." No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having urified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from icentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and aiety to the aid of goodness; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, f having "turned many to righteousness."

ADDISON, in his life, and for some time afterwards, was considered by he greater part of readers as supremely excelling both in poetry and criticism. Part of his reputation may be probably ascribed to the advancement f his fortune; when, as Swift observes, he became a statesman, and saw oets waiting at his levee, it was no wonder that praise was accumulated pon him. Much likewise may be more honourably ascribed to his personal haracter: he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, as not likely to be denied the laurel.

But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame; and Addison to pass through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which indness or interest once raised too high is in danger, lest the next age should, y the vengeance of criticism, sink it in the same proportion. A great writer has lately styled him "an indifferent poet, and a worse critick."

His poetry is first to be considered; of which it must be confessed that it as not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiments, or that igour of sentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport; there is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not ery often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly; but he thinks intly. This is his general character; to which, doubtless, many single assages will furnish exceptions.

Yet, if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into ness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trt powers enough to be negligent. There is in most of his compositions a ness and equability, deliberate and cautious, sometimes with little th lights, but seldom with any thing that offends.

Of this kind seem to be his poems to Dryden, to Sommers, and King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has som in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his Account of the English Poets, he u speak as a " poor thing*;" but it is not worse than his usual strain has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller,

> Thy verse could shew ev'n Cromwell's innocence,
> And compliment the storms that bore him hence.
> O! had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
> But seen great Nassau on the British throne,
> How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page!—

What is this but to say, that he who could compliment Cromw been the proper poet for king William? Addison, however, never the piece.

The Letter from Italy has been always praised, but has neve praised beyond its merit. It is more correct, with less appearance of and more elegant, with less ambition of ornament, than any other poems. There is, however, one broken metaphor, of which noti properly be taken:

> Fir'd with that name—
> I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
> That longs to launch into a nobler strain.

To *bridle* a *goddess* is no very delicate idea; but why must she be *b* because she *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a and whither will she *launch?* into a *nobler strain*. She is in the firs *horse*, in the second a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his his *boat* from *singing*.

The next composition is the far-famed Campaign, which Dr. War termed a " Gazette in Rhyme," with harshness not often used by th nature of his criticism. Before a censure so severe is admitted, let sider that War is a frequent subject of Poetry, and then enquire described it with more justness and force. Many of our own write their powers upon this year of victory: yet Addison's is confessedly performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust o ing; his images are not borrowed merely from books. The sup which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess, and " mighty

* Spence.

at deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

It may be observed that the last line is imitated by Pope;

> Marlb'rough's exploits appear divinely bright—
> Rais'd of themselves their genuine charms they boast,
> And those, that paint them truest, praise them most.

This Pope had in his thoughts; but, not knowing how to use what was not his own, he spoiled the thought when he had borrowed it:

> The well-sung woes shall soothe my ghost;
> He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

Martial exploits may be *painted*; perhaps *woes* may be *painted*: but they are surely not *painted* by being *well-sung*: it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours.

No passage in the Campaign has been more often mentioned than the simile of the Angel, which is said in the Tatler to be "one of the noblest "thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man," and is therefore worthy of attentive consideration. Let it be first enquired whether it be a simile. A poetical simile is the discovery of likeness between two actions, in their general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by different operations in some resemblance of effect. But the mention of another like consequence from a like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a simile to say that the Thames waters fields, as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland, so Ætna vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace says of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verse, as a river swoln with rain rushes from the mountain; or of himself, that his genius wanders in quest of poetical decorations, as the bee wanders to collect honey; he, in either case, produces a simile; the mind is impressed with the resemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been described as writing with the copiousness and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finished his own poetry with the same care as Isocrates polished his orations, instead of similitude, he would have exhibited almost identity; he would have given the same portraits with different names. In the poem now examined, when the English are represented as gaining a fortified pass, by repetition of attack and perseverance of resolution; their obstinacy of courage and vigour of onset is well illustrated by the sea that breaks, with incessant battery, the dikes of Holland. This is a simile: but when Addison, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's person, tells us, that "Achilles thus was formed with every grace,"

here

here in no simile, but a mere exemplification. A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance; an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines, which run on together without approximation, never far separated, and never joined.

Marlborough is so like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almost the same, and performed by both in the same manner. Marlborough "teaches the battle to rage;" the angel "directs the storm; Marlborough "is unmoved in peaceful thought;" the angel is "calm and serene;" Marlborough stands "unmoved amidst the shock of hosts;" the angel rides "calm in the whirlwind." The lines on Marlborough are just and noble; but the simile gives almost the same images a second time.

But perhaps this thought, though hardly a simile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of research, or dexterity of application. Of this, Dr. Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. "If I had set," said he, "ten school-boys to write "on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the Angel, I should "not have been surprised."

The opera of Rosamond, though it is seldom mentioned, is one of the first of Addison's compositions. The subject is well chosen, the fiction is pleasing, and the praise of Marlborough, for which the scene gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence must be, the product of good-luck improved by genius. The thoughts are sometimes great, and sometimes tender; the versification is easy and gay. There is doubtless some advantage in the shortness of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue seems commonly better than the songs. The two comic characters of Sir Trusty and Grideline, though of no great value, are yet such as the poet intended. Sir Trusty's account of the death of Rosamond is, I think, too grossly absurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant; engaging in its process, and pleasing in its conclusion. If Addison had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled.

The tragedy of Cato, which, contrary to the rule observed in selecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into the late collection, is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius. Of a work so much read it is difficult to say any thing new. About things on which the public thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of Cato it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here "excites or assuages "emotion;"

" emotion :" here is " no magical power of raising phantastick terror or wild " anxiety." The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care: we consider not what they are doing, or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. Cato is a being above our solicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedless confidence. To the rest, neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem. But they are made the vehicles of such sentiments and such expression, that there is scarcely a scene in the play which the reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

When Cato was shewn to Pope *, he advised the author to print it, without any theatrical exhibition; supposing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation, and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy.

The universality of applause, however it might quell the censure of common mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed dislike; but his dislike was not merely capricious. He found and shewed many faults; he shewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion; though, at last, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppress.

Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reason, by remarking, that

" A deference is to be paid to a general applause, when it appears that " that applause is natural and spontaneous; but that little regard is to be " had to it, when it is affected and artificial. Of all the tragedies which in " his memory have had vast and violent runs, not one has been excellent, " few have been tolerable, most have been scandalous. When a poet writes " a tragedy, who knows he has judgment, and who feels he has genius, " that poet presumes upon his own merit, and scorns to make a cabal. " That people come cooly to the representation of such a tragedy, without " any violent expectation, or delusive imagination, or invincible prepossession; that such an audience is liable to receive the impressions which the " poem shall naturally make on them, and to judge by their own reason, " and their own judgments, and that reason and judgment are calm and " serene, not formed by nature to make proselytes and to controul and

* Spence.

" lord

" lord it over the imaginations of others. But that when an autho
" writes a tragedy, who knows he has neither genius nor judgment, he ha
" recourse to the making a party, and he endeavours to make up in in
" dustry what is wanting in talent, and to supply by poetical craft th
" absence of poetical art; that such an author is humbly contented t
" raise men's passions by a plot without doors, since he despairs of doing
" it by that which he brings upon the stage. That party and passion
" and prepossession, are clamorous and tumultuous things, and so muc
" the more clamorous and tumultuous by how much the more erroneous
" that they domineer and tyrannize over the imaginations of person
" who want judgment, and sometimes too of those who have it; and
" like a fierce and outrageous torrent, bear down all opposition befor
" them."

He then condemns the neglect of poetical justice; which is always one o his favourite principles.

" 'Tis certainly the duty of every tragick poet, by the exact distribution
" of poetical justice, to imitate the Divine Dispensation, and to inculcate
" a particular Providence. 'Tis true, indeed, upon the stage of the world,
" the wicked sometimes prosper, and the guiltless suffer. But that is per-
" mitted by the Governor of the world, to shew, from the attribute of his
" infinite justice, that there is a compensation in futurity, to prove the im-
" mortality of the human soul, and the certainty of future rewards and pu-
" nishments. But the poetical persons in tragedy exist no longer than the
" reading, or the representation; the whole extent of their entity is circum-
" scribed by those; and therefore, during that reading or representation,
" according to their merits or demerits, they must be punished or rewarded.
" If this is not done, there is no impartial distribution of poetical justice,
" no instructive lecture of a particular Providence, and no imitation of the
" Divine Dispensation. And yet the author of this tragedy does not only
" run counter to this, in the fate of his principal character; but every
" where, throughout it, makes virtue suffer, and vice triumph: for not
" only Cato is vanquished by Cæsar, but the treachery and perfidiousness of
" Syphax prevail over the honest simplicity and the credulity of Juba; and
" the sly subtlety and dissimulation of Portius over the generous frankness
" and open-heartedness of Marcus."

Whatever pleasure there may be in seeing crimes punished and virtue rewarded, yet, since wickedness often prospers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it prosperity on the stage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The Stage may sometimes gratify our wishes; but, if it be truly the "*mirror* " *of life*," it ought to shew us sometimes what we are to expect.

Dennis

Dennis objects to the characters, that they are not natural, or reasonable; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are seen every day, it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct shall be tried. It is, however, not useless to consider what he says of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his son's death.

"Nor is the grief of Cato, in the fourth act, one jot more in nature than "that of his son and Lucia in the third. Cato receives the news of his "son's death not only with dry eyes, but with a sort of satisfaction; and "in the same page sheds tears for the calamity of his country, and does "the same thing in the next page upon the bare apprehension of the danger "of his friends. Now, since the love of one's country is the love of one's "countrymen, as I have shewn upon another occasion, I desire to ask these "questions: Of all our countrymen, which do we love most, those whom "we know, or those whom we know not? And of those whom we know, "which do we cherish most, our friends or our enemies? And of our friends, "who are the dearest to us, those who are related to us, or those who "are not? And of all our relations, for which have we most tenderness, "for those who are near to us, or for those who are remote? And of our "near relations, which are the nearest, and consequently the dearest to us, "our offspring or others? Our offspring, most certainly; as nature, or in "other words providence, has wisely contrived for the preservation of man-"kind. Now, does it not follow, for what has been said, that for a man "to receive the news of his son's death with dry eyes, and to weep at the "same time for the calamities of his country, is a wretched affectation, and "a miserable inconsistency? Is not that, in plain English, to receive with "dry eyes the news of the deaths of those for whose sake our country is a "name so dear to us, and at the same time to shed tears for those for whose "sakes our country is not a name so dear to us?"

But this formidable assailant is less resistable when he attacks the probability of the action, and the reasonableness of the plan. Every critical reader must remark, that Addison has, with a scrupulosity almost unexampled on the English stage, confined himself in time to a single day, and in place to rigorous unity. The scene never changes, and the whole action of the play passes in the great hall of Cato's house at Utica. Much therefore is done in the hall, for which any other place had been more fit; and this impropriety affords Dennis many hints of merriment, and opportunities of triumph. The passage is long; but as such disquisitions are not common, and the objections are skilfully formed and vigorously urged, those who delight in critical controversy will not think it tedious.

"Upon the departure of Portius, Sempronius makes but one soliloquy, and immediately in comes Syphax, and then the two politicians are at

" it immediately. They lay their heads together, with their snuff-box
" their hands, as Mr. Bayes has it, and feague it away. But, in the r
" of that wise scene, Syphax seems to give a seasonable caution to S
" pronius:

" *Syph.* But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate
" Is call'd together? Gods! thou must be cautious;
" Cato has piercing eyes.

" There is a great deal of caution shewn indeed, in meeting in a gover
" own hall to carry on their plot against him. Whatever opinion they
" of his eyes, I suppose they had none of his ears, or they would
" have talked at this foolish rate so near;

" Gods! thou must be cautious.

" Oh! yes, very cautious: for if Cato should overhear you, and tur
" off for politicians, Cæsar would never take you; no, Cæsar would
" take you.

" When Cato, Act II. turns the senators out of the hall, under pr
" of acquainting Juba with the result of their debates, he appears to
" do a thing which is neither reasonable nor civil. Juba might cer
" have better been made acquainted with the result of that debate in
" private apartment of the palace. But the poet was driven upon th
" surdity to make way for another; and that is, to give Juba an op
" tunity to demand Marcia of her father. But the quarrel and rage o
" and Syphax, in the same Act, the invectives of Syphax again
" Romans and Cato; the advice that he gives Juba, in her father'
" to bear away Marcia by force; and his brutal and clamorous rage
" his refusal, and at a time when Cato was scarce out of sight, and p
" not out of hearing, at least, some of his guards or domesticks must
" sarily be supposed to be within hearing; is a thing that is so far
" being probable, that it is hardly possible.

" Sempronius, in the second Act, comes back once more in the
" morning to the governor's hall, to carry on the conspiracy with S
" against the governor, his country, and his family; which is so stupi
" it is below the wisdom of the O- 's, the Mac's, and the Teague's
" Eustace Commins himself would never have gone to Justice-hall, t
" conspired against the government. If officers at Portsmouth shot
" their heads together, in order to the carrying off * J— G—'s n

* The person meant by the initials J. C. is Sir John Gibson, Lieutenant-Governor of Po
in the year 1710, and afterward. He was much beloved in the army, and by the common
called *Jolly Gibson*. H.

dat

laughter, would they meet in J— G—'s hall, to carry on that conspiracy? There would be no necessity for their meeting there, at least till they came to the execution of their plot, because there would be other places to meet in. There would be no probability that they should meet there, because there would be places more private and more commodious. Now there ought to be nothing in a tragical action but what is necessary or probable.

But treason is not the only thing that is carried on in this hall: that, and love, and philosophy, take their turn in it, without any manner of necessity or probability occasioned by the action, as duly and as regularly, without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple league between them, and a mutual agreement that each should give place to and make way for the other, in a due and orderly succession.

We now come to the third Act. Sempronius, in this Act, comes into the governor's hall, with the leaders of the mutiny: but as soon as Cato is gone, Sempronius, who but just before had acted like an unparallel'd knave, discovers himself like an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in the conspiracy.

" *Semp.* Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
" To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
" They're thrown neglected by; but, if it fails,
" They're sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.
" Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
" To sudden death—

'Tis true, indeed, the second leader says, there are none there but friends; but is that possible at such a juncture? Can a parcel of rogues attempt to assassinate the governor of a town of war, in his own house, at mid-day, and, after they are discovered and defeated, can there be none near them but friends? Is it not plain from these words of Sempronius,

" Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
" To sudden death—

and, from the entrance of the guards upon the word of command, that those guards were within ear-shot? Behold Sempronius then palpably discovered. How comes it to pass, then, that, instead of being hanged up with the rest, he remains secure in the governor's hall, and there carries on his conspiracy against the government, the third time in the

"same day, with his old comrade Syphax, who enters at the same time "that the guards are carrying away the leaders, big with the news of the "defeat of Sempronius; though where he had his intelligence so soon is "difficult to imagine? And now the reader may expect a very extraordinary "scene: there is not abundance of spirit indeed, nor a great deal of passion; "but there is wisdom more than enough to supply all defects.

"*Syph.* Our first design, my friend, has prov'd abortive;
"Still there remains an after-game to play:
"My troops are mounted, their Numidian steeds
"Snuff up the winds, and long to scour the desart;
"Let but Sempronious lead us in our flight,
"We'll force the gate, where Marcus keeps his guard,
"And hew down all that would oppose our passage;
"A day will bring us into Cæsar's camp.
"*Semp.* Confusion! I have fail'd of half my purpose;
"Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind.

"Well! but though he tells us the half purpose he has failed of, he does "not tell us the half that he has carried. But what does he mean by

"Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind?

"He is now in her own house; and we have neither seen her nor heard of "her any where else since the play began. But now let us hear Syphax:

"What hinders then, but that you find her out,
"And hurry her away by manly force?

"But what does old Syphax mean by finding her out? They talk as if she "were as hard to be found as a hare in a frosty morning.

"*Semp.* But how to gain admission!

"Oh! she is found out then, it seems.

"But how to gain admission! for access
"Is giv'n to none, but Juba and her brothers.

"But, raillery apart, why access to Juba? For he was owned and received "as a lover neither by the father nor by the daughter. Well! but let that "pass. Syphax puts Sempronius out of pain immediately; and, being a "Numidian, abounding in wiles, supplies him with a stratagem for admis-"sion, that, I believe, is a non-pareille:—

"*Syph.* Thou shalt have Juba's dress, and Juba's guards;
"The doors will open, when Numidia's prince
"Seems to appear before them.

"Sempronius

'Sempronius is, it seems, to pass for Juba in full day at Cato's house, where they were both so very well known, by having Juba's dress and his guards; as if one of the marshals of France could pass for the duke of Bavaria, at noon-day at Versailles, by having his dress and liveries. But how does Syphax pretend to help Sempronius to young Juba's dress? Does he serve him in a double capacity, as general and master of his wardrobe? But why Juba's guards? For the devil of any guards has Juba appeared with yet. Well! though this is a mighty politick invention, yet, methinks, they might have done without it: for since the advice that Syphax gave to Sempronius was,

"To hurry her away by manly force,

in my opinion, the shortest and likeliest way of coming at the lady was by demolishing, instead of putting on an impertinent disguise to circumvent two or three slaves. But Sempronius, it seems, is of another opinion. He extols to the skies the invention of old Syphax:

"*Sempr.* Heavens! what a thought was there!

'Now I appeal to the reader, if I have not been as good as my word. Did I not tell him, that I would lay before him a very wise scene?

'But now let us lay before the reader that part of the scenery of the Fourth Act, which may shew the absurdities which the author has run into, through the indiscreet observance of the Unity of Place. I do not remember that Aristotle has said any thing expressly concerning the Unity of Place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has said enough in the rules which he has laid down for the Chorus. For, by making the Chorus an essential part of Tragedy, and by bringing it on the stage immediately after the opening of the scene, and retaining it there till the very catastrophe, he has so determined and fixed the place of action, that it was impossible for an author on the Grecian stage to break through that unity. I am of opinion, that if a modern tragick poet can preserve the unity of place, without destroying the probability of the incidents, 'tis always best for him to do it; because, by the preservation of that unity as we have taken notice above, he adds grace, and cleanness, and comeliness, to the representation. But since there are no express rules about it, and we are under no compulsion to keep it, since we have no Chorus as the Grecian poet had; if it cannot be preserved, without rendering the greater part of the incidents unreasonable and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it.

"Now

" Now comes bully Sempronius, comically accoutred and equipped w
" his Numidian dress and his Numidian guards. Let the reader attend
" him with all his care; for the words of the wise are precious:

" *Sempr.* The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her covert.

" Now I would fain know why this deer is said to be lodged, since
" have not heard one word, since the play began, of her being at all ou
" harbour: and if we consider the discourse with which she and Li
" begin the Act, we have reason to believe that they had hardly been ta
" ing of such matters in the street. However, to pleasure Sempronius,
" us suppose, for once, that the deer is lodged:

" The deer is lodged, I've tracked her to her covert.

" If he had seen her in the open field, what occasion had he to track h
" when he had so many Numidian dogs at his heels, which, with one hal
" he might have set upon her haunches? If he did not see her in the o
" field, how could he possibly track her? If he had seen her in the str
" why did he not set upon her in the street, since through the street she n
" be carried at last? Now here, instead of having his thoughts upon
" business, and upon the present danger; instead of meditating and cont
" ing how he shall pass with his mistress through the southern gate, wh
" her brother Marcus is upon the guard, and where he would certainly pr
" an impediment to him, which is the Roman word for the *baggage*; inst
" of doing this, Sempronius is entertaining himself with whimsies:

" *Sempr.* How will the young Numidian rave, to see
" His mistress lost! If aught could glad my soul,
" Beyond th' enjoyment of so bright a prize,
" 'Twould be to torture that young gay Barbarian.
" But, hark! what noise? Death to my hopes, 'tis he,
" 'Tis Juba's self! There is but one way left!
" He must be murder'd, and a passage cut
" Through those his guards.

" Pray, what are 'those his guards?' I thought at present that Ju
" guards had been Sempronius's tools, and had been dangling after his he
" But now let us sum up all these absurdities together. Sempronius g
" at noon-day, in Juba's clothes, and with Juba's guards, to Cato's
" lace, in order to pass for Juba, in a place where they were both so w
" well known: he meets Juba there, and resolves to murder him with
" own guards. Upon the guards appearing a little bashful, he threat
" them:

" Hi

" Hah! Dastards, do you tremble!
" Or act like men, or by yon azure heav'n!

But the guards still remaining restive, Sempronius himself attacks ba, while each of the guards is representing Mr. Spectator's sign of the per, awed, it seems, and terrified by Sempronius's threats. Juba ls Sempronius, and takes his own army prisoners and carries them in mph away to Cato. Now I would fain know if any part of Mr. yes's tragedy is so full of absurdity as this?

Upon hearing the clash of swords, Lucia and Marcia come in. The stion is, why no men come in upon hearing the noise of swords in the vernor's hall? Where was the governor himself? Where were his guards? here were his servants? Such an attempt as this, so near the person of overnor of a place of war was enough to alarm the whole garrison: l yet, for almost half an hour after Sempronius was killed, we find ne of those appear, who were the likeliest in the world to be alarmed; l the noise of swords is made to draw only two poor women thither, o were most certain to run away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's ning in, Lucia appears in all the symptoms of an hysterical gentlewo-n:

" *Luc.* Sure 'twas the clash of swords! my troubled heart
" Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows,
" It throbs with fear, and akes at every sound!

d immediately her old whimsy returns upon her:

" O Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake—
" I die away with horror at the the thought.

e fancies that there can be no cutting-of-throats, but it must be for her. this is tragical, I would fain know what is comical. Well! upon this y spy the body of Sempronius; and Marcia, deluded by the habit, eems, takes him for Juba; for, says she,

" The face is muffled up within the garment.

w how a man could fight, and fall with his face muffled up in his ment, is, I think, a little hard to conceive! Besides, Juba, before he led him knew him to be Sempronius. It was not by his garment that knew this; it was by his face then: his face therefore was not muffled. on seeing this man with his muffled face, Marcia falls a-raving; and, ing her passion for the supposed defunct, begins to make his funeral tion. Upon which Juba enters listening, I suppose on tip-toe: for nnot imagine how any one can enter listening, in any other posture.

" I would

" I' would fain know how it came to pass, that during all this time he
" sent nobody, no not so much as a candle-snuffer, to take away the c
" body of Sempronius. Well! but let us regard him listening. Ha
" left his apprehension behind him, he, at first, applies what Marcia say
" Sempronius. But finding at last, with much ado, that he himself is
" happy man, he quits his eve-dropping, and discovers himself just t
" enough to prevent his being cuckolded by a dead man, of whom
" moment before he had appeared so jealous; and greedily intercepts
" bliss, which was fondly designed for one who could not be the better
" it. But here I must ask a quession: how comes Juba to listen here,
" had not listened before throughout the play? Or, how comes he to b
" only person of this tragedy who listens, when love and treason were s
" ten talked in so publick a place as a hall? I am afraid the author was
" ven upon all these absurdities only to introduce this miserable mistak
" Marcia, which, after all, is much below the dignity of tragedy, as
" thing is which is the effect or result of trick.

" But let us come to the scenery of the Fifth Act. Cato appears
" upon the scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture; in his hand Plato's tre
" on the Immortality of the Soul, a drawn sword on the table by h
" Now let us consider the place in which this sight is presented to us.
" place, forsooth, is a long hall. Let us suppose, that any one sh
" place himself in this posture, in the midst of one of our halls in L
" don; that he should appear *solus*, in a sullen posture, a drawn swor
" the table by him; in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of
" Soul, translated lately by Bernard Lintot: I desire the reader to cons
" whether such a person as this would pass with them who beheld him
" great patriot, a great philosopher, or a general, or for some whim
" person who fancied himself all these; and whether the people, who
" longed to the family, would think that such a person had a desig upon i
" midriffs or his own?

" In short, that Cato should sit long enough in the aforesaid posture
" the midst of this large hall, to read over Plato's treatise on the Imm
" tality of the Soul, which is a lecture of two long hours; that he sh
" propose to himself to be private there upon that occasion; that he sh
" be angry with his son for intruding there; then, that he should leave
" hall upon the pretence of sleep, give himself the mortal wound in
" bedchamber, and then be brought back into that hall to expire, su
" to shew his good-breeding and save his friends the trouble of comin
" to his bedchamber; all this appears to me to be improbable, incred
" impossible."

is the censure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expresses it, per- too much horse play in his raillery;" but if his jests are coarse, his nts are strong. Yet as we love better to be pleased than to be taught, read, and the critick is neglected.

ied with consciousness of these detections of absurdity in the conduct, wards attacked the sentiments of Cato; but he then amused him- h petty cavils and minute objections.

ddison's smaller poems, no particular mention is necessary; they le that can employ or require a critick. The parallel of the Princes s, in his verses to Kneller, is often happy, but is too well known to d.

ranslations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of ir. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted; but his will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously para- l. They are however, for the most part, smooth and easy; and, the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure who do not know the originals.

oetry is polished and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has es a striking line, or a shining paragraph; but in the whole he is ther than fervid, and shews more dexterity than strength. He is one of our earliest examples of correctness.

ersification which he had learned from Dryden he debased rather than His rhymes are often dissonant; in his Georgick he admits broken He uses both triplets and alexandrines, but triplets more frequently anslation than in his other works. The mere structure of verses seems have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth in ıd, and too smooth in Cato.

on is now to be considered as a critick; a name which the present on is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as or experimental, rather than scientifick, and he is considered as by taste rather than by principles.

ot uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others, little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects, but by s which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think ary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as acters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which

how circulates in common talk, was in his time rarely to be found. I not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the fen world, any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censu His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected e veyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presen knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible familiar. When he shewed them their defects, he shewed them likew that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; enquiry awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellec elegance was excited, and from this time to our own, life has been gradu exalted, and conservation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his Prefa with very little parsimony; but, though he sometimes condescended to somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastick for th who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to underst their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were lea ing to write, than for those that read only to talk.

An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks being sup ficial might be easily understood, and being just might prepare the mind more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the publick with all pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps h been admired, and the poem still have been neglected; but by the blandi ments of gentleness and facility, he has made Milton an universal, favou with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

He descended now and then to lower disquisitions; and by a serious disp of the beauties of *Chevy Chase*, exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagst who bestowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb*; and to the contei of Dennis, who considering the fundamental position of his criticism, t *Chevy Chase* pleases, and ought to please, because it is natural, obser "that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombast or tumour, wh soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affe tion, which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable; and by im cillity, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring appearances, and weakening its effects." In *Chevy Chase* there is not m of either bombast or affectation; but there is chill and lifeless imbecill The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impress on the mind.

Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his l

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marks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his Essays on *Wit*, and on the *Pleasures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain.

As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestick scenes and daily occurrences. He never "outsteps the modesty of "nature," nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity, that he can be hardly said to invent: yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in the enthusiastick or superstitious: he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax, nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shewn sometimes as the phantom of a vision; sometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy; and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation; yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted, he

performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energ
he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have
studied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though n
greatly rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to att
English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not osten
must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

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# H U G H E S.

JOHN HUGHES, the son of a citizen in London, and of Anne Burgess, of an ancient family in Wiltshire, was born at Marlborough, July 29, 677. He was educated at a private-school; and though his advances in iterature are, in the *Biographia*, very ostentatiously displayed, the name f his master is somewhat ungratefully concealed *.

At nineteen he drew the plan of a tragedy; and paraphrased, rather too iffusely, the ode of Horace which begins "Integer Vitæ." To poetry he dded the science of musick, in which he seems to have attained considera- le skill, together with the practice of design, or rudiments of painting.

His studies did not withdraw him wholly from business, nor did business inder him from study. He had a place in the office of ordnance; and as secretary to several commissions for purshasing lands necessary to secure ie royal docks at Chatham and Portsmouth; yet found time to acquaint imself with modern languages.

In 1697 he published a poem on the *Peace of Ryswick*; and in 1699 ano- ier piece, called *The Court of Neptune*, on the return of king William, which e addressed to Mr. Montague, the general patron of the followers of the luses. The same year he produced a song on the duke of Gloucester's irth-day.

He did not confine himself to poetry, but cultivated other kinds of writ- ig with great success; and about this time shewed his knowledge of hu- an nature by an *Essay on the Pleasure of being deceived*. In 1702 he publish- l, on the death of king William, a Pindarick ode called *The House of Nassau*; and wrote another paraphrase on the *Otium Divos* of Horace.

In 1703 his ode on Musick was performed at Stationers Hall; and he wrote fterwards six cantatas, which were set to musick by the greatest master of at time, and seem intended to oppose or exclude the Italian opera, an exo- ck and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and al- ays has prevailed.

* He was educated in a dissenting academy, of which the rev. Mr. Thomas Rowe was tutor; d was a fellow student there with Dr. Isaac Watts, Mr. Samuel Say, and other persons of eminence. the "Horæ Lyricæ" of Dr. Watts is a poem to the memory of Mr. Rowe. H.

His

His reputation was now so far advanced, that the public began t reverence to his name; and he was solicited to prefix a preface to the lation of *Boccalini*, a writer whose satirical vein cost him his life in Ital who never, I believe, found many readers in this country, even thou troduced by such powerful recommendation.

He translated Fontenelle's *Dialogues of the Dead;* and his versic perhaps read at that time, but is now neglected; for by a book not nec and owing its reputation wholly to its turn of diction, little notice gained but from those who can enjoy the graces of the original. To alogues of Fontenelle he added two composed by himself; and, thou only an honest but a pious man, dedicated his work to the earl of Wh He judged skilfully enough of his own interest; for Wharton, when h lord lieutenant to Ireland, offered to take Hughes with him, and es him; but Hughes, having hopes or promises, from another man in of some provision more suitable to his inclination, declined Wharton' and obtained nothing from the other.

He translated the *Miser* of Moliere, which he never offered to the and occasionally amused himself with making versions of favourite sc other plays.

Being now received as a wit among the wits, he paid his contribu literary undertakings, and assisted both the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Gu* In 1712 he translated Vertot's History of the *Revolution of Portuga* duced an *Ode to the Creator of the World, from the Fragments of O* brought upon the stage an opera called *Calypso and Telemachus*, inte shew that the English language might be very happily adapted to This was impudently opposed by those who were employed in the opera; and, what cannot be told without indignation, the intruders h interest with the duke of Shrewsbury, then lord chamberlain, w married an Italian, as to obtain an obstruction of the profits, though inhibition of the performance.

There was at this time a project formed by Tonson for a translatio *Pharsalia*, by several hands; and Hughes englished the tenth book. design, as must often happen where the concurrence of many is ne felt to the ground; and the whole work was afterwards perfor Rowe.

His acquaintance with the great writers of his time appears to ha very general; but of his intimacy with Addison there is a remarkabl It is told, on good authority, that *Cato* was finished and played by suasion. It had long wanted the last act, which he was desired by to supply. If the request was sincere, it proceeded from an opinion

ver it was, that did not last long; for when Hughes came in a week to hew him his first attempt, he found half an act written by Addison himself.

He afterwards published the works of *Spenser*, with his Life, a Glossary, nd a Discourse on Allegorical Poetry; a work for which he was well qualified, as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary's knowledge of the obsolete words. He did not much revive the curiosity of the publick; for near thirty years elapsed before his edition was reprinted. The same year produced his *Apollo and Daphne*, of which the success was very earnestly promoted by Steele, who, when the rage of party id not misguide him, seems to have been a man of boundless benevolence.

Hughes had hitherto suffered the mortifications of a narrow fortune; but n 1717 the lord chancellor Cowper set him at ease, by making him secretary to the Commissions of the Peace; in which he afterwards, by a particular request, desired his successor lord Parker to continue him. He had now affluence; but such is human life, that he had it when his declining health could neither allow him long possession nor quick enjoyment.

His last work was his tragedy, *The Siege of Damascus*, after which *a Siege* became a popular title. This play, which still continues on the Stage, and of which it is unnecessary to add a private voice to such continuance of approbation, is not acted or printed according to the author's original draught, or his settled intention. He had made *Phocyas* apostatize from his religion; after which the abhorrence of *Eudocia* would have been reasonable, his misery would have been just, and the horrors of his repentance exemplary. The players, however, required that the guilt of *Phocyas* should terminate in desertion to the enemy; and Hughes, unwilling that his relations should lose the benefit of his work, complied with the alteration.

He was now weak with a lingering consumption, and not able to attend the rehearsal, yet was so vigorous in his faculties, that only ten days before his death he wrote the dedication to his patron lord Cowper. On February 17, 1717-20, the play was represented, and the author died. He lived to hear that it was well received; but paid no regard to the intelligence, being then wholly employed in the meditations of a departing Christian.

A man of his character was undoubtedly regretted; and Steele devoted an essay, in the paper called *The Theatre*, to the memory of his virtues. His life is written in the Biographia with some degree of favourable partiality; and an account of him is prefixed to his works, by his relation the late Mr. Duncombe, a man whose blameless elegance deserved the same respect.

The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of *Swift* and *Pope*.

" A month

" A month ago," says Swift, " was sent me over, by a friend of mine " the works of *John Hughes*, Esquire. They are in prose and verse. I " never heard of the man in my life, yet I find your name as a subscriber " He is too grave a poet for me; and I think among the *mediocrists*, in " prose as well as verse."

To this Pope returns: " To answer your question as to Mr. *Hughes*; " what he wanted in genius, he made up as an honest man; but he was of " the class you think him."

In Spence's Collections Pope is made to speak of him with still less respect, as having no claim to poetical reputation but from his tragedy.

SHEF-

# SHEFFIELD,

## DUKE OF

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, descended from a long series of illustrious ancestors, was born in 1649, the son of Edmund earl of Mulgrave, who ied 1658. The young lord was put into the hands of a tutor, with whom e was so little satisfied, that he got rid of him in a short time, and, at an ge not exceeding twelve years, resolved to educate himself. Such a purose, formed at such an age, and sucessfully prosecuted, delights as it is range, and instructs as it is real.

His literary acquisitions are more wonderful, as those years in which ley are commonly made were spent by him in the tumult of a military fe or the gaiety of a court. When war was declared against the Dutch, he ent at seventeen on board the ship in which prince Rupert and the duke of lbemarle sailed, with the command of the fleet; but by contrariety of inds they were restrained from action. His zeal for the king's service was ccompensed by the command of one of the independent troops of horse, ien raised to protect the coast.

Next year he received a summons to parliament, which as he was then it eighteen years old, the earl of Northumberland censured as at least indent, and his objection was allowed. He had a quarrel with the earl of ochester, which he has perhaps too ostentatiously related, as Rochester's rviving sister, the lady Sandwich, is said to have told him with very sharp proaches.

When another Dutch war (1672) broke out, he went again a volunteer in ship which the celebrated lord Ossory commanded; and there made, as relates, two curious remarks.

'I have observed two things, which I dare affirm, though not generally believed. One was, that the wind of a cannon-bullet, though flying never so near, is incapable of doing the least harm; and indeed, were it otherwise, no man above deck would escape. The other was, that a great shot may be sometimes avoided, even as it flies, by changing one's ground a little; for, when the wind sometimes blew away the smoke, t was so clear a sun-shiny day, that we could easily perceive the bores

" (that were half-spent) fall into the water, and from thence bound up again " among us, which gives sufficient time for making a step or two on any " side; though in so swift a motion, 'tis hard to judge well in what line the " bullet comes, which if mistaken, may by removing cost a man his life, " instead of saving it."

His behaviour was so favourably represented by lord Ossory, that he was advanced to the command of the Katherine, the best second-rate ship in the navy.

He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land-forces were sent ashore by prince Rupert; and he lived in the camp very familiarly with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own, and had the promise of a garter, which he obtained in his twenty-fifth year. He was likewise made gentleman of the bed-chamber.

He afterwards went into the French service, to learn the art of war under Turenne, but staid only a short time. Being by the duke of Monmouth opposed in his pretentions to the first troop of horse-guards, he, in return, made Monmouth suspected by the duke of York. He was not long after, when the unlucky Monmouth fell into disgrace, recompensed with the lieutenancy of Yorkshire and the government of Hull.

Thus rapidly did he make his way both to military and civil honours and employments; yet, busy as he was, he did not neglect his studies, but at least cultivated poetry; in which he must have been early considered as uncommonly skilful, if it be true which is reported, that, when he was yet not twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel.

The Moors having besieged Tangier, he was sent (1680) with two thousand men to its relief. A strange story is told of danger to which he was intentionally exposed in a leaky ship to gratify some resentful jealousy of the king, whose health he therefore would never permit at his table, till he saw himself in a safer place. His voyage was prosperously performed in three weeks, and the Moors without a contest retired before him.

In this voyage he composed the *Vision*; a licentious poem, such as was fashionable in those times, with little power of invention or propriety of sentiment.

At his return he found the king kind, who perhaps had never been angry; and he continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the succession of king James, to whom he was intimately known, and by whom he thought himself beloved, he naturally expected still brighter sun shine; but all know how soon that reign began to gather clouds. His expectations were not disappointed; he was immediately admitted into the privy-council and made lord chamberlain. He accepted a place in the high commission,

mmission, without knowledge, as he declared after the Revolution, of its legality. Having few religious scruples, he attended the king to mass, and peeled with the rest; but had no dispensation to receive the Romish Faith, r to force it upon others; for when the priests, encouraged by his appearnces of compliance, attempted to convert him, he told them, as Burnet as recorded, that he was willing to receive instruction, and that he had ken much pains to believe in God who made the world and all men in it; but at he should not be easily persuaded *that man was quits, and made God again.*

A pointed sentence is bestowed by successive transmission on the last whom t will fit; this censure of transubstantiation, whatever be its value was utterd long ago by Anne Askew, one of the first sufferers for the Protestant Reigion, who in the time of Henry VIII. was tortured in the Tower; conerning which there is reason to wonder that it was not known to the Hisorian of the Reformation.

In the Revolution he acquiesced, though he did not promote it. There as once a design of associating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange: but the earl of Shrewsbury discouraged the attempt, by declaring hat Mulgrave would never concur. This king William afterwards told him, nd asked what he would have done if the proposal had been made. "Sir," aid he, "I would have discovered it to the king whom I then served." To hich king William replied, "I cannot blame you."

Finding king James irremediably excluded, he voted for the conjunctive overeignty upon this principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and is consort equal, and it would please the prince their protector to have a hare in the sovereignty. This vote gratified king William; yet, either by the king's distrust or his own discontent, he lived some years without employment. He looked on the king with malevolence, and, if his verses or his prose may be credited, with contempt. He was, notwithstanding this version or indifference, made marquis of Normandy (1694); but still opposed the court on some important questions; yet at last he was received into the cabinet council, with a pension of three thousand pounds.

At the accession of queen Anne, whom he has said to have courted when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation (1702) she made him lord privy seal, and soon after lord lieutenant of the North-riding of Yorkshire. He was then named commissioner for treating with the Scots about the Union; and was made next year first duke of Normandy, and then of Buckinghamshire, there being suspected to be somewhere a latent claim to the title of Buckingham.

Soon after, becoming jealous of the duke of Marlborough, he resigned he privy seal, and joined the discontented Tories in a motion extremely offensive to the Queen, for inviting the princess Sophia to England. The

Queen courted him back with an offer no less than that of the chancel ship; which he refused. He now retired from business, and built house in the Park, which is now the Queen's, upon ground granted by Crown.

When the ministry was changed (1710), he was made lord chamber of the household, and concurred in all transactions of that time, ex that he endeavoured to protect the Catalans. After the Queen's death he came a constant opponent of the Court; and, having no public busines supposed to have amused himself by writing his two tragedies. He February 24, 1720-21.

He was thrice married; by his two first wives he had no children; his third, who was the daughter of king James by the countess of D chester, and the widow of the earl of Anglesey, he had, besides o children that died early, a son born in 1716, who died in 1735, and put end to the line of Sheffield. It is observable, that the Dukes three w were all widows. The Dutches died in 1742.

His character is not to be proposed as worthy of imitation. His reli he may be supposed to have learned from Hobbes; and his morality such as naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His sentiments with res to women he picked up in the court of Charles; and his principles conc ing property were such as a gaming-table supplies. He was censure covetous, and has been defended by an instance of inattention to his aff as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleness. I said, however, to have had much tenderness, and to have been very r to apologise for his violence of passion.

He is introduced into this collection only as a poet; and, if we c the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar r But favour and flattery are now at an end; criticism is no longer soft by his bounties or awed by his splendor, and, being able to take a steady view, discovers him to be a writer that sometimes glimmers rarely shines, feebly laborious, and at best but pretty. His songs are common topicks; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, rejoices, like any other maker of little stanzas: to be great, he hardly t to be gay, is hardly in his power.

In the Essay on Satire he was always supposed to have had the he Dryden. His essay on Poetry is the great work, for which he was pr by Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope, and doubtless by many more who logies have perished.

Upon this piece he appears to have set a high value; for he was all h improving it by successive revisals, so that there is scarcely any poem

found of which the last edition differs more from the first. Amongst other changes, mention is made of some compositions of Dryden, which were written after the first appearance of the Essay.

At the time when this work first appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully established, and therefore Tasso and Spenser were set before him. The two last lines were these. The Epic Poet, says he,

> Must above Milton's lofty flights prevail,
> Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater Spenser fail.

The last line in succeeding editions was shortened, and the order of names continued; but now Milton is at last advanced to the highest place, and the passage thus adjusted,

> Must above Tasso's lofty flights prevail,
> Succeed where Spenser, and ev'n Milton fail.

Amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent: *lofty* does not suit Tasso so well as Milton.

One celebrated line seems to be borrowed. The Essay calls a perfect character

> A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.

Scaliger in his poems, terms Virgil *sine labe monstrum*. Sheffield can scarcely be supposed to have read Scaliger's poetry, perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

Of this Essay, which Dryden has exalted so highly, it may be justly said that the precepts are judicious, sometimes new, and often happily expressed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and some strange appearances of negligence; as, when he gives the laws of elegy, he insists upon connection and coherence; without which, says he,

> 'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will;
> But not an elegy, nor writ with skill,
> No panegyrick, nor a Cooper's Hill.

Who would not suppose that Waller's Panegyrick and Denham's Cooper's Hill were Elegies?

His verses are often insipid; but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet.

PRIOR.

# PRIOR.

MATTHEW PRIOR is one of those that have burst out from an obscure original to great eminence. He was born July 21, 1664, according to some, at Winburne in Dorsetshire, of I know not what parents; others say that he was the son of a Joiner of London; he was perhaps willing enough to leave his birth unsettled *, in hope, like Don Quixote, that the historian of his actions might find him some illustrious alliance.

He is suposed to have fallen, by his father's death, into the hands of his uncle, a vintner † near Charing-cross, who sent him for some time to Dr. Busby at Westminster; but not intending to give him any education beyond that of the school, took him, when he was well advanced in literature, to his own house, where the earl of Dorset, celebrated for patronage of genius found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was so well pleased with his proficiency, that he undertook the care and cost of his academical education.

He entered his name in St. John's College at Cambridge in 1682, in his eighteenth year; and it may be reasonably supposed that he was distinguished among his contemporaries. He became a Bachelor, as is usual, in four years ‡; and two years afterwards wrote the poem on the *Deity*, which stands first in his volume.

It is the established practice of that College, to send every year to the earl of Exeter some poems upon sacred subjects, in acknowledgement of a benefaction enjoyed by them from the bounty of his ancestor. On this occasion

* The difficulty of settling Prior's birth-place is great. In the register of his College he is called, at his admission by the President, *Matthew Prior* of *Windburn* in *Middlesex*. by himself next day, *Matthew Prior* of *Dorsetshire*, in which county, not in Middlesex, *Windborn*, or *Winborne* as it stands in the *Villare*. is found. When he stood candidate for his fellowship, five years afterwards, he was registered again by himself as of *Middlesex*. The last record ought to be preferred, because it was made upon oath. It is observable, that, as a native of *Winborne*, he is stiled *Filius Georgii Prior, Generosi*; not consistently with the common account of the meanness of his birth. Dr. J.

† Samuel Prior kept the Rummer Tavern near Charing Cross in 1685. The annual feast of the nobility and gentry living in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields was held at his house, Oct. 14, that year. N.

‡ He was admitted to his Bachelor's degree in 1686, and to his Master's, by mandate, in 1700. H.

ere those verses written, which, though nothing is said of their success em to have recommended him to some notice; for his praise of the coun-ss's musick, and his lines on the famous picture of Seneca, afford reason or imagining that he was more or less conversant with that family.

The same year he published the *City mouse and country Mouse*, to ridicule Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, in conjunction with Mr Montague. There is story * of great pain suffered, and of tears shed, on this occasion, by Dry-en, who thought it hard that an old man should be so treated by those to whom he had always been civil." By tales like these is the envy, raised y superior abilities, every day gratified: when they are attacked, every ne hopes to see them humbled; what is hoped is readily believed, and what believed is confidently told. Dryden had been more accustomed to hosti-ities, than that such enemies should break his quiet; and if we can suppose im vexed, it would be hard to deny him sense enough to conceal his un-asiness.

The *City Mouse and Country Mouse* procured its authors more solid ad-antages than the pleasure of fretting Dryden; for they were both speedily preferred. Montague, indeed, obtained the first notice, with some degree of discontent, as it seems, in Prior, who probably knew that his own part of he performance was the best. He had not, however, much reason to com-plain; for he came to London, and obtained such notice, that (in 1691) he as sent to the Congress at the Hague as secretary to the embassy. In this ssembly of princes and nobles, to which Europe has perhaps scarcely seen ny thing equal, was formed the grand alliance against Lewis; which at last did not produce effects proportionate to the magnificence of the trans-action.

The conduct of Prior, in this splendid initiation into public business, was so pleasing to king William that he made him one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber; and he is supposed to have passed some of the next years in the quiet cultivation of literature and poetry.

The death of Queen Mary (in 1695) produced a subject for all the writers: perhaps no funeral was ever so poetically attended. Dryden, indeed, as a man discountenanced and deprived, was silent; but scarcely any other maker of verses omitted to bring his tribute of tuneful sorrow. An emulation of elegy was universal. Maria's praise was not confined to the English language, but fills a great part of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*.

Prior who was both a poet and a courtier, was too diligent to miss this opportunity of respect. He wrote a long ode, which was presented to the king by whom it was not likely to be ever read.

* Spence.

In

In two years he was secretary to another embassy at the treaty of Ryswick (in 1697 *); and next year had the same office at the court of France, where he is said to have been considered with great distinction.

As he was one day surveying the apartments at Versailles, being shewn the Victories of Lewis, painted by Le Brun, and asked whether the king of England's palace had any such decorations; "The monuments of my Mas-"ter's actions," said he, "are to be seen every where but in his own house." The pictures of Le Brun are not only in themselves sufficiently ostentatious, but were explained by inscriptions so arrogant, that Boileau and Racine thought it necessary to make them more simple.

He was in the following year at Loo with the king; from whom, after a long audience, he carried orders to England, and upon his arrival became under-secretary of state in the earl of Jersey's office; a post which he did not retain long, because Jersey was removed; but he was soon made commissioner of Trade.

This year (1700) produced one of his longest and most splendid compositions, the *Carmen Seculare*, in which he exhausts all his powers of celebration. I mean not to accuse him of flattery; he probably thought all that he writ, and retained as much veracity as can be properly exacted from a poet professedly encomiastic. King William supplied copious materials for either verse or prose. His whole life had been action, and none ever denied him the resplendent qualities of steady resolution and personal courage. He was really in Prior's mind what he represents him in his verses; he considered him as a hero, and was accustomed to say, that he praised others in compliance with the fashion, but that in celebrating king William he followed his inclination. To Prior gratitude would dictate praise, which reason would not refuse.

Among the advantages to arise from the future years of William's reign, he mentions a *Society for useful Arts*, and among them

> Some that with care true eloquence shall teach,
> And to just idoms fix our doubtful speech;
> That from our writers distant realms may know
> The thanks we to our monarchs owe,
> And schools profess our tongue through every land,
> That has invok'd his aid, or bless'd his hand.

Tickell, in his *Prospect of Peace*, has the same hope of a new academy:

> In happy chains our daring language bound,
> Shall sport no more in arbitrary sound.

* He received in September 1697, a present of 200 guineas from the lords justices, for his trouble in bringing over the treaty of peace. N.

Whether

Whether the similitude of those passages which exhibit the same thought on the same occasion proceeded from accident or imitation, is not easy to determine. Tickell might have been impressed with his expectation by Swift's *Proposal for ascertaining the English Language*, then lately published.

In the parliament that met in 1701, he was chosen representative of Eastinstead. Perhaps it was about this time that he changed his party; for he voted for the impeachment of those lords who had persuaded the king to the partition-treaty, a treaty in which he had himself been ministerially employed.

A great part of queen Anne's reign was a time of war, in which there was little employment for negotiators, and Prior had therefore leisure to make or to polish verses. When the battle of Blenheim called forth all the versemen, Prior, among the rest, took care to shew his delight in the increasing honour of his country by an Epistle to Boileau.

He published, soon afterwards, a volume of poems, with the encomiastic character of his deceased patron the duke of Dorset: it began with the College Exercise, and ended with the *Nut-brown Maid*.

The battle of Ramilies soon afterwards (in 1706) excited him to another sort of poetry. On this occasion he had fewer or less formidable rivals; and it would not be easy to name any other composition produced by that event which is now remembered.

Every thing has its day. Through the reigns of William and Anne no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry. In the last war, when France was disgraced and overpowered in every quarter of the globe, when Spain, coming to her assistance, only shared her calamities, and the name of an Englishman was reverenced through Europe, no poet was heard amidst the general acclamation; the fame of our counsellors and heroes was intrusted to the Gazetteer.

The nation in time grew weary of the war, and the queen grew weary of her ministers. The war was burdensome, and the ministers were insolent. Harley and his friends began to hope that they might, by driving the Whigs from court and from power, gratify at once the queen and the people. There was now a call for writers, who might convey intelligence of past abuses, and shew the waste of public money, the unreasonable *Conduct of the Allies*, the avarice of generals, the tyranny of minions, and the general danger of approaching ruin.

For this purpose a paper called the *Examiner* was periodically published, written as it happened, by any wit of the party, and sometimes as is said by Mrs. Manley. Some are owned by Swift; and one, in ridicule of Garth's verses to Godolphin upon the loss of his place, was written by Prior, and answered by Addison, who appears to have known the author either by conjecture or intelligence.

The Tories, who were now in power, were in haste to end the war; Prior, being recalled (1710) to his former employment of making trea was sent (July 1711) privately to Paris with propositions of peace. He remembered at the French court; and returning in about a month, bro with him the Abbé Gaultier, and M. Mesnager, a minister from France, vested with full powers.

This transaction not being avowed, Mackay, the master of the D packet-boat, either zealously or officiously, seized Prior and his associat Canterbury. It is easily supposed that they were soon released.

The negotiation was begun at Prior's house, where the Queen's mini met Mesnager (September 20, 1711) and entered privately upon the business. The importance of Prior appears from the mention made of by St. John in his Letter to the Queen.

"My Lord Treasurer moved, and all my Lords were of the same "nion, that Mr. Prior should be added to those who are empowered to s "the reason for which is, because he, having personally treated with M "sieur de Torcy, is the best witness we can produce of the sense in w "the general preliminary engagements are entered into: besides whicl "he is the best versed in matters of trade of all your Majesty's ser "who have been trusted in this secret, if you shall think fit to employ "in the future treaty of commerce, it will be of consequence that he "been a party concerned in concluding that convention, which must b "rule of this treaty."

The assembly of this important night was in some degree clandestine, design of treating not been yet openly declared, and, when the Whigs turned to power, was aggravated to a charge of high treason: thougl Prior remarks in his imperfect answer to the report of the *Committee of Se* no treaty ever was made without private interviews and preliminary discuss

My business is not the history of the peace, but the life of Prior. conferences began at Utrecht on the first of January (1711-12), and the lish plenipotentiaries arrived on the fifteenth. The ministers of the diff potentates conferred and conferred; but the peace advanced so slowly, speedier methods were found necessary; and Bolingbroke was sent to Pa adjust differences with less formality; Prior either accompanied him or fol ed him; and after his departure had the appointments and authority c ambassador, though no public character.

By some mistake of the Queen's orders, the court of France had beer gusted; and Bolingbroke says in his Letter, "Dear Mat, hide the na "ness of thy country, and give the best turn thy fertile brain will su "thee with to the blunders of thy countrymen, who are not much b "politicians than the French are poets."

Soon after, the duke of Shrewsbury went on a formal embassy to Paris. t is related by Boyer, that the intention was to have joined Prior in the commission, but that Shrewsbury refused to be associated with a man so meanly orn. Prior therefore continued to act without a title till the duke returned ext year to England, and then he assumed the style and dignity of ambasador.

But, while he continued in appearance a private man, he was treated with onfidence by Lewis, who sent him with a letter to the Queen, written in avour of the elector of Bavaria. "I shall expect," says he, "with im- patience, the return of Mr. Prior, whose conduct is very agreeable to me." And while the Duke of Shrewsbury was still at Paris, Bolingbroke rote to Prior thus: "Monsieur de Torcy has a confidence in you; make use of it, once for all, upon this occasion, and convince him thoroughly, that we must give a different turn to our parliament and our people, according to their resolution at this crisis."

Prior's public dignity and splendour commenced in August 1713, and continued till the August following; but I am afraid that, according to the usual fate of greatness, it was attended with some perplexities and mortifications. He had not all that is customarily given to ambassadors: he hints to the Queen, in an imperfect poem, that he had no service of plate; and it appeared, by the debts which he contracted, that his remittances were not punctually made.

On the first of August, 1714, ensued the downfall of the Tories, and the degradation of Prior. He was recalled; but was not able to return, being detained by the debts which he had found it necessary to contract, and which were not discharged before March, though his old friend Montague was now at the head of the treasury.

He returned then as soon as he could, and was welcomed on the 25th of March by a warrant, but was, however, suffered to live in his own house, under the custody of the messenger, till he was examined before a committee of the Privy Council, of which Mr. Walpole was chairman, and Lord Coningsby, Mr. Stanhope, and Mr. Lechmere, were the principal interrogators; who, in this examination, of which there is printed an account not unentertaining, behaved with the boisterousness of men elated by recent authority. They are represented asking questions sometimes vague, sometimes insidious, and writing answers different from those which they received. Prior, however, seems to have been overpowered by their turbulence; for he confesses that he signed what, if he had ever come before a legal judicature, he should have contradicted or explained away. The oath was administered by Boscawen, a Middlesex justice, who at last was going to write his attestation on the wrong side of the paper.

They were very industrious to find some charge against Oxford; and asked Prior, with great earnestness, who was present when the preliminary articles

were talked of or signed at his house? He told them, that either the earl of Oxford or the duke of Shrewsbury was absent, but he could not remember which; an answer which perplexed them, because it supplied no accusation against either. "Could any thing be more absurd," says he, "or more in-"human, than to propose to me a question, by the answering of which I "might, according to them, prove myself a traitor? And notwithstanding "their solemn promise, that nothing which I could say should hurt myself, "I had no reason to trust them: for they violated that promise about five "hours after. However, I owned I was there present. Whether this was "wisely done or no, I leave to my friends to determine."

When he had signed the paper, he was told by Walpole, that the committee were not satisfied with his behaviour, nor could give such an account of it to the Commons as might merit favour; and that they now thought a stricter confinement necessary than to his own house. "Here," says he, "Boscawen played the moralist, and Coningsby the christian, but both very "aukwardly." The messenger, in whose custody he was to be placed, was then called, and very decently asked by Coningsby, "if his house was secur-"ed by bars and bolts?" The messenger answered, "No," with astonishment. At which Coningsby very angrily said, "Sir, you must secure this "prisoner; it is for the safety of the nation: if he escape, you shall an-"swer for it."

They had already printed their report; and in this examination were endeavouring to find proofs.

He continued thus confined for some time, and Mr. Walpole (June 10, 1715) moved for an impeachment against him. What made him so acrimonious does not appear: he was by nature no thirster for blood. Prior was a week after committed to close custody, with orders that "no person should "be admitted to see him without leave from the Speaker."

When, two years after, an Act of Grace was passed, he was excepted and continued still in custody, which he had made less tedious by writing his *Alma*. He was, however, soon after discharged.

He had now his liberty, but he had nothing else. Whatever the profit of his employments might have been, he had always spent it, and at the age of fifty-three was with all his abilities, in danger of penury, having yet no solid revenue but from the fellowship of his college, which, when in his exaltation he was censured for retaining it, he said, he could live upon at last.

Being however generally known and esteemed, he was encouraged to add other poems to those which he had printed, and to publish them by subscription. The expedient succeeded by the industry of many friends, who circulated the proposals *, and the care of some, who, it it said, withheld the money from him lest he should squander it. The price of the volume was two

* Swift obtained many Subscriptions for him in Ireland. E.

guineas; the whole collection was four thousand; to which lord Harley, son of the earl of Oxford, to whom he had invariably adhered, added equal sum for the purchase of Down-hall, which Prior was to enjoy dur- life, and Harley after his decease.

He had now, what wits and philosophers have often wished, the power of sing the day in contemplative tranquillity. But it seems that busy men dom live long in a state of quiet. It is not unlikely that his health de- sed. He complains of deafness; "for," says he, "I took little care of my ears while I was not sure if my head was my own."

Of any occurrences in his remaining life I have found no account. In a ter to Swift, "I have," says he, "treated lady Harriot at Cambridge, (a Fellow of a College treat!) and spoke verses to her in a gown and cap! What, the plenipotentiary, so far concerned in the damned peace at Utrecht! the man that makes up half the volume of terse prose, that makes up the report of the committee, speaking verses! *Sic est homo sum.*"

He died at *Wimpole*, a seat of the earl of Oxford, on the eighteenth of ptember 1721, and was buried in Westminster; where on a monument, which, as the "last piece of human vanity," he left five hundred pounds, ngraven this epitaph:

Sui Temporis Historiam meditanti,
Paulatim obrepens Febris
Operi simul & Vitæ filum abrupit,
Sept. 18, An. Dom. 1721, Ætat. 57.
H. S. E.
Vir Eximius
Serenissimis
Regi GULIELMO Reginæque MARIÆ
In Congressione Fœderatorum
Hagæ anno 1690 celebrata,
Deinde Magnæ Britanniæ Legatis
Tum iis,
Qui anno 1697 Pacem RYSWICKI confecerunt,
Tum iis,
Qui apud Gallos annis proximis Legationem obierunt;
Eodem etiam anno 1697 in Hibernia
SECRETARIUS;
Necnon in utroque Honorabili consessu
Eorum,
Qui anno 1700 ordinandis Commercii negotiis
Quique anno 1711 dirigendis Portorii rebus,
Præsidebant,
COMMISSIONARIUS;
Postremo
Ab ANNA
Felicissimæ memoriæ Reginâ

Ad

Ad Ludovicum XIV. Galliæ Regem
Missus anno 1711
De Pace stabilienda,
(Pace etiamnum durante
Diuque ut boni jam omnes sperant duratura)
Cum summa potestate Legatus.
MATTHÆUS PRIOR Armiger;
Qui
Hos omnes, quibus cumulatus est, Titulos
Humanitatis, Ingenii, Eruditionis laude
Superavit;
Cui enim nascenti faciles arriserant Musæ.
Hunc Puerum Schola hic Regia perpolivit,
Juvenem in Collegio S'ti Johannis
Cantabrigiæ optimis Scientiis instruxit;
Virum denique auxit! & perfecit
Multa cum viris Principibus consuetudo;
Ita natus, ita institutus,
A Vatum Choro avelli numquam potuit,
Sed solebat sæpe rerum Civilium gravitatem
Amœniorum Literarum Studiis condire:
Et cum omne adeo Poetices genus
Haud infeliciter tentaret,
Tum in Fabellis concinne lepideque texendis
Mirus Artifex
Neminem habuit parem.
Hæc liberalis animi oblectamenta:
Quam nullo Illi labore constiterint,
Facile ii perspexere, quibus usus est Amici;
Apud quos Urbanitatum & Leporum plenus
Cum ad rem, quæcunque forte inciderat,
Aptè variè copiosèque alluderet,
Interea nihil quæsitum, nihil vi expressum
Videbatur,
Sed omnia ultro effluere,
Et quasi jugi e fonte affatim exuberare,
Ita suos tandem dubios reliquit,
Essetne in Scriptis, Poeta Elegantior,
An in Convictu, Comes Jucundior.

Of Prior, eminent as he was, both by his abilities and station, ver memorials have been left by his contemporaries; the account therefore now be destitute of his private character and familiar practices. He li a time when the rage of party detected all which it was any man's inte hide; and as little ill is heard of Prior, it is certain that not mucl known. He was not afraid of provoking censure; for when he fo

the Whigs *, under whose patronage he first entered the world, he became a Tory so ardent and determinate, that he did not willingly consort with men of different opinions. He was one of the sixteen Tories who met weekly, and agreed to address each other by the Title of *Brother*; and seems to have adhered, not only by concurrence of political designs, but by peculiar affection, to the earl of Oxford and his family. With how much confidence he was trusted, has been already told.

He was however, in Pope's opinion, fit only to make verses, and less qualified for business than Addison himself. This was surely said without consideration. Addison, exalted to a high place, was forced into degradation by the sense of his own incapacity; Prior, who was employed by men very capable of estimating his value, having been secretary to one embassy, had, when great abilities were again wanted, the same office another time; and was, after so much experience of his knowledge and dexterity, at last sent to transact a negotiation in the highest degree arduous and important; for which he was qualified, among other requisites, in the opinion of Bolingbroke, by his influence upon the French minister, and by skill in questions of commerce above other men.

Of his behaviour in the lighter parts of life, it is too late to get much intelligence. One of his answers to a boastful Frenchman has been related, and to an impertinent he made another equally proper. During his embassy, he sat at the opera by a man, who, in his rapture, accompanied with his own voice the principal singer. Prior fell to railing at the performer with all the terms of reproach that he could collect, till the Frenchman ceasing from his song, began to expostulate with him for his harsh censure of a man who was confessedly the ornament of the stage. "I know that," says the ambassador, "mais il chante si haut, que je ne scaurois vous entendre."

In a gay French company, where every one sung a little song or stanza, of which the burden was, "Bannisons la Melancholie;" when it came to his turn to sing, after the performance of a young lady that sat next him, he produced these extemporary lines:

Mais celle voix, et ces beaux yeux,
Font Cupidon trop dangereux,
Et je suis triste quand je crie
Bannissons la Melancholie.

Tradition represents him as willing to descend from the dignity of the poet and stateman to the low delights of mean company. His Chloe probably was sometimes ideal: but the woman with whom he cohabited was a despicable drab † of the lowest species. One of his wenches, perhaps Chloe, while he was absent from his house, stole his plate and ran away; as was related

* Spence. † Spence; [and see Gent. Mag. vol. LVII. p. 1039.]

lated by a woman who had been his servant. Of this propensity t converse I have seen an account so seriously ridiculous, that it seem serve insertion *.

" I have been assured that Prior, after having spent the evening w " ford, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, would go and smoke a p " drink a bottle of ale, with a common soldier and his wife, in Lon " before he went to bed; not from any remains of the lowness of his " as one said, but, I suppose, that his faculties,

" —Strain'd to the height,
" In that celestial colloquy sublime,
" Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair."

Poor Prior, why was he so *strained*, and in such *want* of *repair*, conversation with men, not, in the opinion of the world, much wi himself? But such are the conceits of speculatists, who *strain* their to find in a mine what lies upon the surface.

His opinions, so far as the means of judging are left us, seem to ha right; but his life was, it seems, irregular, negligent, and sensual.

PRIOR has written with great variety, and his variety has made l pular. He has tried all styles from the grotesque to the solemn, and so failed in any as to incur derision or disgrace.

His works may be distinctly considered as comprising Tales, Love Occasional Poems, Alma, and Solomon.

His Tales have obtained general approbation, being written with g miliarity and great spriteliness; the language is easy, but seldom gra the numbers smooth, without appearance of care. Of these tales th only four. The *Ladle*, which is introduced by a Preface, neither ne nor pleasing, neither grave nor merry. *Paulo Purganti*; which has l a Preface, but of more value than the Tale. *Hans Carvel*, not over and *Protogenes* and *Apelles*, an old story, mingled, by an affectation n greeable, with modern images. The *Young Gentleman in Love* has h just claim to the title of *a Tale*. I know not whether he be the a author of any Tale which he has given us. The adventure of *Hans* has passed through many successions of merry wits; for it is to be f Ariosto's Satires, and is perhaps yet older. But the merit of such is the art of telling them.

In his Amorous Effusions he is less happy; for they are not dict nature or by passion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderness. Th the coldness of Cowley, without his wit, the dull exercises of a skill sifter, resolved at all adventures to write something about Chloe, and

* Richardsoniana.

to be amorous by dint of study. His fictions therefore are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek Epigram, asks when she was seen *naked and bathing*. Then *Cupid* is *mistaken*; then *Cupid* is *disarmed*; then he loses his darts to *Ganymede*; then *Jupiter* sends him a summons by *Mercury*. Then *Chloe* goes a-hunting, with an *ivory quiver graceful at her side*; Diana mistakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is surely despicable; and even when he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods and goddesses, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not "like a man of this world."

The greatest of all his amorous essays is *Henry* and *Emma*; a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman. The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy is such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself.

His occasional poems necessarily lost part of their value, as their occasions, being less remembered, raised less emotion. Some of them, however, are preserved by their inherent excellence. The burlesque of Boileau's Ode on Namur has, in some parts, such airiness and levity, as will always procure it readers, even among those who cannot compare it with the original. The Epistle to Boileau is not so happy. The Poems to the King are now perused only by young students, who read merely that they may learn to write; and of the *Carmen Seculare*, I cannot but suspect that I might praise or censure it by caprice, without danger of detection; for who can be supposed to have laboured through it? Yet the time has been when this neglected work was so popular, that it was translated into Latin by no common master.

His poem on the battle of Ramillies is necessarily tedious by the form of the stanza: an uniform mass of ten lines, thirty-five times repeated, inconsequential and slightly connected, must weary both the ear and the understanding. His imitation of Spencer, which consists principally in *I wcen* and *I weet*, without exclusion of later modes of speech, makes his poem neither ancient nor modern. His mention of *Mars* and *Bellona*, and his comparison of Marlborough to the Eagle that bears the thunder of *Jupiter*, are all puerile and unaffecting; and yet more despicable is the long tale told by *Lewis*, in his despair, of *Brute* and *Troynovant*, and the teeth of *Cadmus*, with his similies of the raven and eagle, and wolf and lion. By the help of such easy fictions, and vulgar topicks, without acquaintance with life, and without knowledge of art or nature, a poem of any length, cold and lifeless like this, may be easily written on any subject.

In his epilogues to *Phædra* and to *Lucius*, he is very happily facetious; but in the Prologue before the Queen, the pedant has found his way, with Minerva, Perseus, and Andromeda.

His epigrams and lighter pieces are, like those of others, sometimes elegant, sometimes trifling, and sometimes dull; among the best are the *Camelion* and the epitaph on *John* and *Joan*.

Scarcely any one of our poets has written so much and translated so little; the version of Callimachus is sufficiently licentious; the paraphrase on St. Paul's Exhortation to Charity is eminently beautiful.

*Alma* is written in professed imitation of Hudibras, and has at least one accidental resemblance: Hudibras wants a plan, because it is left imperfect; Alma is imperfect, because it seems never to have had a plan. Prior appears not to have proposed to himself any drift or design, but to have written the casual dictates of the present moment.

What Horace said when he imitated Lucilius might be said of Butler by Prior, his numbers were not smooth or neat: Prior excelled him in versification; but he was, like Horace, *inventore minor*; he had not Butler's exuberance of matter and variety of illustration. The spangles of wit which he could afford, he knew how to polish; but he wanted the bullion of his master. Butler pours out a negligent profusion, certain of the weight, but careless of the stamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine shew. Alma has many admirers, and was the only piece among Prior's works of which Pope said he should wish to be the author.

*Solomon* is the work to which he entrusted the protection of his name, and which he expected succeeding ages to regard with veneration. His affection was natural; it had undoubtedly been written with great labour; and who is willing to think that he has been labouring in vain? He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity: he perceived in it many excellences, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail, the power of engaging attention and alluring curiosity.

Tediousness is the most fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are single and local, but tediousness pervades the whole; other faults are censured and forgotten, but the power of tediousness propagates itself. He that is weary the first hour is more weary the second; as bodies forced into motion, contrary to their tendency, pass more and more slowly through every successive interval of space.

Unhappily this pernicious failure is that which an author is least able to discover. We are seldom tiresome to ourselves; and the act of composition fills and delights the mind with change of language and succession of images; every couplet when produced is new, and novelty is the great source of pleasure. Perhaps no man ever thought a line superfluous when he first wrote it, or contracted his work till his ebullitions of invention had subsided. And even if he should controul his desire of immediate renown, and keep his

work

work *nine years* unpublished, he will be still the author, and still in danger of deceiving himself: and if he consults his friends, he will probably find men who have more kindness than judgement, or more fear to offend than desire to instruct.

The tediousness of this poem proceeds not from the uniformity of the object, for it is sufficiently diversified, but from the continued tenour of the narration; in which Solomon relates the successive vicissitudes of his own mind, without the intervention of any other speaker, or the mention of any other agent, unless it be Abra; the reader is only to learn what he thought, and to be told that he thought wrong. The event of every experiment is foreseen, and therefore the process is not much regarded.

Yet the work is far from deserving to be neglected. He that shall peruse it will be able to mark many passages, to which he may recur for instruction or delight: many from which the poet may learn to write, and the philosopher to reason.

If Prior's poetry be generally considered, his praise will be that of correctness and industry, rather than of compass of comprehension, or activity of fancy. He never made any effort of invention: his greater pieces are only tissues of common thoughts; and his smaller, which consist of light images or single conceits, are not always his own. I have traced him amongst the French epigrammatists, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obscure authors. The *Thief and Cordelier* is, I suppose, generally considered as an original production; with how much justice this Epigram may tell, which was written by Georgius Sabinus, a poet now little known or read, though once the friend of Luther and Melancthon.

De Sacerdote Furem consolante.

Quidam sacrificus furem comitatus euntem
Huc ubi dat sontes carnificina neci,
Ne sis mœstus, ait; summi conviva Tonantis
Jam cum cœlitibus (si modo credis) eris.
Ille gemens, si vera mihi solatia præbes,
Hospes apud superos sis meus oro, refert.
Sacrificus contra; mihi non convivia fas est
Ducere, jejunans hac edo luce nihil.

What he has valuable he owes to his diligence and his judgment. His diligence has justly placed him amongst the most correct of the English poets; and he was one of the first that resolutely endeavoured at correctness. He never sacrifices accuracy to haste, nor indulges himself in contemptuous negligence, or impatient idleness; he has no careless lines, or entangled sentiments; his words are nicely selected, and his thoughts fully expanded. If his part of his character suffers any abatement, it must be from the dispro-

portion of his rhymes, which have not always sufficient consonance, and from the admission of broken lines into his *Solomon*; but perhaps he thought, like Cowley, that hemistichs ought to be admitted into heroic poetry.

He had apparently such rectitude of judgement as secured him from every thing that approached to the ridiculous or absurd; but as laws operate in civil agency not to the excitement of virtue, but the expression of wickedness, so judgement in the operations of intellect can hinder faults, but not produce excellence. Prior is never low, nor very often sublime. It is said by Longinus of Euripides, that he forces himself sometimes into grandeur by violence of effort, as the lion kindles his fury by the lashes of his own tail. What ever Prior obtains above mediocrity seems the effort of struggle and of toil. He has many vigorous but few happy lines; he has every thing by purchase and nothing by gift; he had no *nightly visitations* of the Muse, no infusions of sentiment or felicities of fancy.

His diction, however, is more his own than that of any among the successors of Dryden; he borrows no lucky turns, or commodious modes of language from his predecessors. His phrases are original, but they are sometimes harsh; as he inherited no elegances, none has he bequeathed. His expression has every mark of laborious study: the line seldom seems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then put by constraint into their places, where they do duty, but do it sullenly. In his greater compositions there may be found more rigid stateliness than graceful dignity.

Of versification he was not negligent: what he received from Dryden he did not lose; neither did he increase the difficulty of writing by unnecessary severity, but uses Triplets and Alexandrines without scruple. In his preface to *Solomon* he proposes some improvements, by extending the sense from one couplet to another, with a variety of pauses. This he has attempted; but without success; his interrupted lines are unpleasing, and his sense as less distinct is less striking.

He has altered the stanza of Spenser, as a house is altered by building another in its place of a different form. With how little resemblance he has formed his new stanza to that of his master, these speciments will shew.

SPENSER.

She flying fast from heaven's hated face,
And from the world that her discover'd wide,
Fled to the wasteful wilderness apace,
From living eyes her open shame to hide,
But that fair crew of knights, and Una fair,
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest themselves, and weary powers repair,
Where store they found of all, that dainty was and rare.

PRIOR.

PRIOR.

To the close rock the frighted raven flies,
Soon as the rising eagle cuts the air:
The shaggy wolf unseen and trembling lies,
When the hoarse roar proclaims the lion near.
" Ill-starr'd did we our forts and lines forsake,
To dare our British foes to open fight:
Our conquest we by stratagem should make
Our triumph had been founded in our flight.
'Tis ours, by craft and by surprise to gain:
'Tis theirs to meet in arms, and battle in the plain.

this new structure of his lines he has avoided difficulties; nor am I that he has lost any of the power of Pleasing; but no longer imitates ser.

me of his poems are written without regularity of measure; for when ommenced poet, he had not recovered from our Pindarick infatuation: e problably lived to be convinced, that the essence of verse is order and onance.

s numbers are such as mere diligence may attain; they seldom offend ar, and seldom sooth it; they commonly want airiness, lightness, and ty: what is smooth, is not soft. His verses always roll, but they sel- flow.

survey of the life and writings of Prior may exemplify a sentence which ubtless understood well, when he read Horace at his uncle's; " the sel long retains the scent which it first receives. In his private relaxa- he revived the tavern, and in his amorous pedantry he exhibited the ge. But on higher occasions and nobler subjects, when habit was over- ered by necessity of reflection, he wanted not wisdom as a statesman, elegance as a poet.

CON-

# CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE descended from a family in Staffordshire, of so great antiquity that it claims a place among the few that extend their line beyond the Norman Conquest; and was the son of William Congreve, second son of Richard Congreve of Congreve and Stratton. He visited, once at least, the residence of his ancestors; and, I believe, more places than one are still shewn, in groves and gardens, where he is related to have written his *Old Batchelor*.

Neither the time nor place of his birth are certainly known; if the inscription upon his monument be true, he was born in 1672. For the place, it was said by himself, that he owed his nativity to England, and by every body else that he was born in Ireland. Southern mentioned him with sharp censure, as a man that meanly disowned his native country. The biographers assigned his nativity to Bardsa, near Leeds in Yorkshire, from the account given by himself, as they suppose, to Jacob.

To doubt whether a man of eminence has told the truth about his own birth, is, in appearance, to be very deficient in candour; yet nobody can live long without knowing that falsehoods of convenience or vanity, falsehoods from which no evil immediately visible ensues, except the general degradation of human testimony, are very lightly uttered, and once uttered are sullenly supported. Boileau, who desired to be thought a rigorous and steady moralist, having told a petty lie to Lewis XIV. continued it afterwards by false dates; thinking himself obliged *in honour*, says his admirer, to maintain what, when he said it, was so well received.

Wherever Congreve was born, he was educated first at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Dublin, his father having some military employment that stationed him in Ireland: but after having passed through the usual preparatory studies, as may be reasonably supposed, with great celerity and success, his father thought it proper to assign him a profession; by which something proper might be gotten; and about the time of the Revolution sent him, at the age of sixteen, to study law in the Middle Temple, where he lived for several years, but with very little attention to Statutes or Reports.

His disposition to become an author appeared very early; as he very early felt that force of imagination, and possessed that copiousness of sentiment, by which intellectual pleasure can be given. His first performance was a novel, called *Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled:* It is praised by the biographers, who quote some part of the preface, that is indeed, for such a time of life, uncommonly judicious. I would rather praise it than read it.

His first dramatick labour was the *Old Batchelor;* of which he says, in his defence against Collier, "that comedy was written, as several know, some years before it was acted. When I wrote it, I had little thoughts of the stage; but did it, to amuse myself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness. Afterwards, through my indiscretion, it was seen, and in some little time more it was acted; and I, through the remainder of my indiscretion, suffered myself to be drawn in, to the prosecution of a difficult and thankless study, and to be involved in a perpetual war with knaves and fools."

There seems to be a strange affectation in authors of appearing to have done every thing by chance. The *Old Batchelor* was written for amusement, in the language of convalescence. Yet it is apparently composed with great laborateness of dialogue, and incessant ambition of wit. The age of the writer considered, it is indeed a very wonderful performance; for, whenever written, it was acted (1693) when he was not more than twenty-one years old; and was then recommended by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Southern, and Mr. Maynwaring. Dryden said that he never had seen such a first play; but they found it deficient in some things requisite to the success of its exhibition, and by their greater experience fitted it for the stage. Southern used to relate of one comedy, probably of this, that when Congreve read it to the players, he pronounced it so wretchedly, that they had almost rejected it; but they were afterwards so well persuaded of its excellence, that, for half a year before it was acted, the manager allowed its author the privilege of the house.

Few plays have ever been so beneficial to the writer; for it procured him the patronage of Halifax, who immediately made him one of the commissioners for licensing coaches, and soon after gave him a place in the pipe-office, and another in the customs of six hundred pounds a year. Congreve's conversation must surely have been at least equally pleasing with his writings.

Such a comedy, written at such an age, requires some consideration. As the lighter species of dramatick poetry professes the imitation of common life, of real manners, and daily incidents, it apparently presupposes a familiar knowledge of many characters, and exact observation of the passing world; the difficulty therefore is, to conceive how this knowledge can be obtained by a boy.

But

But if the *Old Batchelor* be more nearly examined, it will be found to be one of those comedies which may be made by a mind vigorous and acute, and furnished with comick characters by the perusal of other poets, without much actual commerce with mankind. The dialogue is one constant reciprocation of conceits, or clash of wit, in which nothing flows necessarily from the occasion, or is dictated by nature. The characters both of men and women are either fictitious and artificial, as those of *Heartwell* and the Ladies; or easy and common, as *Wittol* a tame idiot, *Bluff* a swaggering coward, and *Fondlewife* a jealous puritan; and the catastrophe arises from a mistake not very probably produced, by marrying a woman in a mask.

Yet this gay comedy, when all these deductions are made, will still remain the work of very powerful and fertile faculties: the dialogue is quick and sparkling, the incidents such, as seize the attention, and the wit so exuberant that it "o'er-informs its tenement."

Next year he gave another specimen of his abilities in *The Double Dealer* which was not received with equal kindness. He writes to his patron the lord Halifax a dedication, in which he endeavours to reconcile the reader to that which found new friends among the audience. These apologies are always useless: "de gustibus non est disputandum;" men may be convinced, but they cannot be pleased, against their will. But though taste is obstinate, it is very variable, and time often prevails when arguments have failed.

Queen Mary conferred upon both these plays the honour of her presence; and when she died, soon after Congreve testified his gratitude by a despicable effusion of elegiac pastoral; a composition in which all is unnatural, and yet nothing is new.

In another year (1695) his prolifick pen produced *Love for Love*; a comedy of nearer alliance to life, and exhibiting more real manners, than either of the former. The character of *Foresight* was then common. Dryden calculated nativities; both Cromwell and king William had their lucky days; and Shaftesbury himself, though he had no religion, was said to regard predictions. The *Sailor* is not accounted very natural, but he is very pleasant.

With this play was opened the new Theatre, under the direction of Betterton the tragedian; where he exhibited two years afterwards (1697) *The Mourning Bride*, a tragedy, so written as to shew him sufficiently qualified for either kind of dramatic poetry.

In this play, of which, when he afterwards revised it, he reduced the versification to greater regularity, there is more bustle than sentiment; the plot is busy and intricate, and the events take hold on the attention; but, except a very few passages, we are rather amused with noise, and perplexed with stratagem, than entertained with any true delineation of national characters. This, however, was received with more benevolence than any other of his works, and still continues to be acted and applauded.

But

But whatever objections may be made either to his comic or tragic excellence, they are lost at once in the blaze of admiration, when it is remembered that he had produced these four plays before he had passed his twenty-fifth year; before other men, even such as are some time to shine in eminence, have passed their probation of literature, or presume to hope for any other notice than such as is bestowed on diligence and enquiry. Among all the efforts of early genius which literary history records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.

About this time began the long-continued controversy between Collier and the poets. In the reign of Charles the First, the Puritans had raised a violent clamour against the drama, which they considered as an entertainment not lawful to Christians, an opinion held by them in common with the church of Rome; and Prynne published *Histrio-mastix*, a huge volume, in which stage plays were censured. The outrages and crimes of the Puritans brought afterwards their whole system of doctrine into disrepute, and from the Restoration the poets and players were left at quiet; for to have molested them would have had the appearance of tendency to puritanical malignity.

This danger, however, was worn away by time; and Collier, a fierce and implacable Nonjuror, knew that an attack upon the theatre would never make him suspected for a puritan; he therefore (1698) published *A short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, I believe with no other motive than religious zeal and honest indignation. He was formed for a controvertist; with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastick; and with all those powers exalted and invigorated by just confidence in his cause.

Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to Durfey. His onset was violent: those passages, which while they stood single had passed with little notice, when they were accumulated and exposed together, excited horror; the wise and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the publick charge.

Nothing now remained for the poets but to resist or fly. Dryden's conscience or his prudence, angry as he was, with-held him from the conflict: Congreve and Vanbrugh attempted answers. Congreve, a very young man, elated with success, and impatient of censure, assumed an air of confidence and security. His chief artifice of controversy is to retort upon his adversary his own words; he is very angry, and, hoping to conquer Collier with his own weapons, allows himself the use of every term of contumely and of contempt; but he has the sword without the arm of Scanderbeg; he has his antagonist's coarseness, but not his strength. Collier replied; for contest was his delight, he was not to be frighted from his purpose or his prey.

The cause of Congreve was not tenable; whatever glosses he might use for the defence or palliation of single passages, the general tenour and tendency of his plays must always be condemned. It is acknowledged, with universal conviction, that the perusal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated.

The stage found other advocates, and the dispute was protracted through ten years; but at last Comedy grew more modest; and Collier lived to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre.

Of the powers by which this important victory was atchieved, a quotation, from *Love for Love*, and the remark upon it, may afford a specimen.

Sir Samps. "Sampson's a very good name; for your Sampsons were "strong dogs from the beginning."

Angel. "Have a care—if you remember, the strongest Sampson of your "name pull'd an old house over his head at last.

"Here you have the Sacred History burlesqued; and Sampson once more "brought into the house of Dagon, to make sport for the Philistines!"

Congreve's last play was *The Way of the World*; which, though as he hints in his dedication it was written with great labour and much thought, was received with so little favour, that, being in a high degree offended and disgusted, he resolved to commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience.

From this time his life ceased to be publick; he lived for himself and for his friends; and among his friends was able to name every man of his time whom wit and elegance had raised to reputation. It may be therefore reasonably supposed that his manners were polite, and his conversation pleasing.

He seems not to have taken much pleasure in writing, as he contributed nothing to the *Spectator*, and only one paper to the *Tatler*, though published by men with whom he might be supposed willing to associate; and though he lived many years after the publication of his Miscellaneous Poems, yet he added nothing to them, but lived on in literary indolence; engaged in no controversy, contending with no rival, neither soliciting flattery by publick commendations, nor provoking enmity by malignant criticism, but passing his time among the great and splendid, in the placid enjoyment of his fame and fortune.

Having owed his fortune to Halifax, he continued always of his patron's party, but, as it seems, without violence or acrimony; and his firmness was naturally esteemed, as his abilities were reverenced. His security therefore was never violated; and when, upon the extrusion of the Whigs, some intercession was used lest Congreve should be displaced, the earl of Oxford made this answer;

"Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni.

"Nec tam aversus equos Tyriâ sol jungit ab urbe."

He

He that was thus honoured by the adverse party, might naturally expect to be advanced when his friends returned to power, and he was accordingly made secretary for the island of Jamaica; a place, I suppose, without trust or care, but which with his post in the customs, is said to have afforded him twelve hundred pounds a year.

His honours were yet far greater than his profits. Every writer mentioned him with respect: and, among other testimonies to his merit, Steele made him the patron of his Miscellany, and Pope inscribed to him his translation of the Iliad.

But he treated the Muses which ingratitude; for, having long conversed familiarly with the great, he wished to be considered rather as a man of fashion than of wit; and, when he received a visit from Voltaire, disgusted him by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him."

In his retirement he may be supposed to have applied himself to books; for he discovers more literature than the poets have commonly attained. But his studies were in his latter days obstructed by cataracts in his eyes, which at last terminated in blindness. This melancholy state was aggravated by the gout, for which he sought relief by a journey to Bath; but being overturned in his chariot, complained from that time of a pain in his side, and died at his house in Surrey-street in the Strand, Jan. 29, 1723-9. Having lain in state in the Jerusalem-chamber, he was buried in Westminster-abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory by Henrietta duchess of Marlborough, to whom, for reasons either not known or not mentioned, he bequeathed a legacy of about ten thousand pounds; the accumulation of attentive parsimony, which, though to her superfluous and useless, might have given great assistance to the ancient family from which he descended, at that time by the imprudence of his relation reduced to difficulties and distress.

CONGREVE has merit of the highest kind; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot speak distinctly; for since I inspected them many years have passed; but what remains upon memory is, that his characters are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life. He formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers; but at which he endeavoured, he seldom failed of performing. His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion: his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. His comedies have therefore, in some degree, the operation of tragedies; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination.

Of his miscellaneous poetry, I cannot say any thing very favourable. The powers of Congreve seem to desert him when he leaves the stage, as Antæus was no longer strong than when he could touch the ground. It cannot be observed without wonder, that a mind so vigorous and fertile in dramatick compositions should on any other occasion discover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in these little pieces neither elevation of fancy, selection of language, nor skill in versification: yet, if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in *The Mourning Bride*.

ALMERIA.

It was a fancy'd noise; for all is hush'd.

LEONORA.

It bore the accent of a human voice.

ALMERIA.

It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted isle;
We'll listen—

LEONORA.

Hark!

ALMERIA.

No, all is hush'd, and still as death.—'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet; he feels what he remembers to have felt before; but he feels it with great increase of sensibility; he recognizes a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty.

Yet could the author, who appears here to have enjoy'd the confidence of nature, lament the death of queen Mary in lines like these:

The rocks are cleft, and new descending rills,
Furrow the brows of all th' impending hills.
The water-gods to floods their rivulets turn,
And each, with streaming eyes, supplies his wanting urn,
The Fauns forsake the woods, the Nymphs the grove,
And round the plain in sad distraction rove:

In

In prickly brakes their tender limbs they tear,
And leave on thorns their locks of golden hair,
With their sharp nails, themselves the Satyrs wound,
And tug their shaggy beards, and bite with grief the ground.
Lo Pan himself, beneath a blasted oak,
Dejected lies, his pipe in pieces broke.
See Pales weeping too, in wild despair,
And to the piercing winds her bosom bear.
And see yon fading myrtle, where appears
The Queen of Love, all bath'd in flowing tears;
See how she wrings her hands, and beats her breast,
And tears her useless girdle from her waist:
Hear the sad murmurs of her sighing doves!
For grief they sigh, forgetful of their loves.

d, many years after, he gave no proof that time had improved his wisdom is wit; for, on the death of the marquis of Blandford, this was his song;

And now the winds which had so long been still,
Began the swelling air with sighs to fill;
The water-nymphs, who motionless remain'd,
Like images of ice, while she complain'd,
Now loos'd their streams: as when descending rains
Roll the steep torrents headlong o'er the plains.
The prone creation, who so long had gaz'd,
Charm'd with her cries, and at her griefs amaz'd,
Began to roar and howl with horrid yell,
Dismal to hear, and terrible to tell!
Nothing but groans and sighs were heard around,
And Echo multiplied each mournful sound.

both these funeral poems, when he has *yelled* out many *syllables* of sense-*dolour*, he dismisses his reader with senseless consolation: from the grave Pastora rises a light that forms a star; and where Amaryllis wept for yntas, from every tear sprung up a violet.

But William is his hero, and of William he will sing.

The hovering winds on downy wings shall wait around,
And catch, and waft to foreign lands, the flying sound.

t cannot but be proper to shew what they shall have to catch and carry:

'Twas now, when flowery lawns the prospect made,
And flowering brooks beneath a forest shade,
A lowing heifer, loveliest of the herd,
Stood feeding by; while two fierce bulls prepar'd
Their armed heads for fight; by fate of war to prove
The victor worthy of the fair-one's love.
Unthought presage of what met next my view;
For soon the shady scene withdrew.
And now, for woods, and fields, and springing flowers,
Behold a town arise, bulwark'd with walls, and lofty towers;

Two

Two rival armies all the plain o'erspread,
Each in battalia rang'd, and shining arms array'd;
With eager eyes beholding both from far,
Namur, the prize and mistress of the war.

The *Birth of the Muse* is a miserable fiction. One good line it has, which was borrowed from Dryden. The concluding verses are these:

This said, no more remain'd. Th' etherial host
Again impatient crowd the crystal coast.
The father, now, within his spacious hands,
Encompass'd all the mingled mass of seas and lands;
And, having heav'd aloft the ponderous sphere,
He launch'd the world to float in ambient air.

Of his irregular poems, that to Mrs. Arabella Hunt seems to be the best: his ode for Cecilia's Day, however, has some lines which Pope had in his mind when he wrote his own.

His imitations of Horace are feebly paraphrastical, and the additions which he makes are of little value. He sometimes retains what were more properly omitted, as when he talks of *vervain* and *gums* to propitiate Venus.

Of his translations, the satire of Juvenal was written very early, and may therefore be forgiven, though it had not the massiness and vigour of the original. In all his versions strength and spriteliness are wanting. his Hymn to Venus, from Homer, is perhaps the best. His lines are weakened with expletives, and his rhymes are frequently imperfect.

His petty poems are seldom worth the cost of criticism; sometimes the thoughts are false, and sometimes common. In his verses on lady Gethin, the latter part is an imitation of Dryden's ode on Mrs. Killigrew; and Doris, that has been so lavishly flattered by Steele, has indeed some lively stanzas, but the expression might be mended; and the most striking part of the character had been already shewn in *Love for Love*. His *Art of Pleasing* is founded on a vulgar, but perhaps impracticable principle, and the staleness of the sense is not concealed by any novelty of illustration or elegance of diction.

This tissue of poetry, from which he seems to have hope da lasting name, is totally neglected, and known only as it appended to his plays.

While comedy or while tragedy is regarded, his plays are likely to be read; but, except what relates to the stage, I know not that he has ever written a stanza that is sung, or a couplet that is quoted. The general character of his Miscellanies is, that they shew little wit, and little virtue.

Yet to him it must be confessed that we are indebted for the correction of a national error, and for the cure of our Pindarick madness. He first taught the English writers that Pindar's odes were regular: and though certainly he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyrick poetry, he has shewn us that enthusiasm has its rules, and that in mere confusion there is neither grace nor greatness.

BLACK-

# BLACKMORE.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE is one of those men whose writings have attracted much notice, but of whose life and manners very little has been communicated, and whose lot it has been to be much oftener mentioned by enemies than by friends.

He was the son of Robert Blackmore of Corsham in Wiltshire, styled by Wood *Gentleman*, and supposed to have been an attorney: having been for some time educated in a country-school, he was sent at thirteen to Westminster; and in 1668 was entered at Edmund-Hall in Oxford, where he took the degree of M. A. June 3, 1676, and resided thirteen years; a much longer time than it is usual to spend at the university; and which he seems to have passed with very little attention to the business of the place; for, in his poems, the ancient names of nations or places, which he often introduces, are pronounced by chance. He afterwards travelled: at Padua he was made doctor of physick; and, after having wandered about a year and a half on the Continent, returned home.

In some part of his life, it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a school, an humiliation with which, though it certainly lasted but a little while, his enemies did not forget to reproach him, when he became conspicuous enough to excite malevolence; and let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been once a school-master is the only reproach which all the perspicuity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life.

When he first engaged in the study of physic, he enquired, as he says, of Dr. Sydenham what authors he should read, and was directed by Sydenham, to Don Quixote: "which," said he, "is a very good book; I read it still." The perverseness of mankind makes it often mischievous in men of eminence to give way to merriment, the idle and the illiterate will long shelter themselves under this foolish apophthegm.

Whether he rested satisfied with this direction, or sought for better, he commenced physician, and obtained high eminence and extensive practice. He became fellow of the College of Physicians, April 12, 1687, being one of

of the thirty which, by the new charter of king James, were added to former Fellows. His residence was in Cheapside *, and his friends w chiefly in the city. In the early part of Blackmore's time, a citizen wa term of reproach; and his place of abode was another topick to which adversaries had recourse in the penury of scandal.

Blackmore, therefore, was made a poet not by necessity but inclinati and wrote not for a livelihood but for fame; or, if he may tell his own m tives, for a nobler purpose, to engage poetry in the cause of Virtue.

I believe it is peculiar to him, that his first public work was an heroi poem. He was not known as a maker of verses, till he published (in 16 *Prince Arthur*, in ten books, written, as he relates, "by such catches a "starts, and in such occasional uncertain hours as his profession afford "and for the greatest part in coffee-houses, or in passing up and down t "streets." For the latter part of this apology he was accused of writi "to the rumbling of his chariot-wheels." He had read, he says, "l "little poetry throughout his whole life; and for fifteen years before h "not written an hundred verses, except one copy of Latin verses in pr "of a friend's book."

He thinks, and with some reason, that from such a performance perfect cannot be expected; but he finds another reason for the severity of his c surers, which he expresses in language such as Cheapside easily furnish "I am not free of the Poets Company, having never kissed the governo "hands; mine is therefore not so much as a permission poem, but a dow "right interloper. Those gentlemen who carry on their poetical trade i "joint stock, would certainly do what they could to sink and ruin an u "censed adventurer, notwithstanding I disturbed none of their factories, i "imported any goods they had ever dealt in." He had lived in the city he had learned its note.

That *Prince Arthur* found many readers, is certain; for in two years it h three editions; a very uncommon instance of favourable reception, a time when literary curiosity was yet confined to particular classes of the na on. Such success naturally raised animosity; and Dennis attacked it by formal criticism, more tedious and disgusting than the work which he c demns. To this censure may be opposed the approbation of Locke and t admiration of Molineux, which are found in their printed Letters. M lineux is particularly delighted with the song of *Mopas*, which is therefo subjoined to this narrative.

It is remarked by Pope, that what "raises the hero often sinks the ma Of Blackmore it may be said, that as the poet sinks, the man rises; the a madversions of Dennis, insolent and contemptuous as they were, rai

* At Sadler's Hall.

in him no implacable resentment: he and his critick were afterwards friends; and in one of his latter works he praises Dennis as "equal to Boileau in "poetry, and superior to him in critical abilities."

He seems to have been more delighted with praise than pained by censure, and, instead of slackening, quickened his career. Having in two years produced ten books of *Prince Arthur*, in two years more (1697) he sent into the world *King Arthur* in twelve. The provocation was now doubled, and the resentment of wits and criticks may be supposed to have encreased in proportion. He found, however, advantages more than equivalent to all their outrages; he was this year made one of the physicians in ordinary to king William, and advanced by him to the honour of knighthood, with a present of a gold chain and medal.

The malignity of the wits attributed his knighthood to his new poem; but king William was not very studious of poetry, and Blackmore perhaps had other merit: for he says, in his Dedication to *Alfred*, that "he had a "greater part in the succession of the house of Hanover than ever he had "boasted."

What Blackmore could contribute to the Succession, or what he imagined himself to have contributed, cannot now be known. That he had been of considerable use, I doubt not but he believed, for I hold him to have been very honest; but he might easily make a false estimate of his own importance: those whom their virtue restrains from deceiving others, are often disposed by their vanity to deceive themselves. Whether he promoted the succession or not, he at least approved it, and adhered invariably to his principles and party through his whole life.

His ardour of poetry still continued; and not long after (1700) he published a *Paraphrase on the Book of Job*, and other parts of the scripture. This performance Dryden, who pursued him with great malignity, lived long enough to ridicule in a Prologue.

The wits easily confederated against him, as Dryden, whose favour they almost all courted, was his professed adversary. He had besides given them reason for resentment, as, in his Preface to *Prince Arthur*, he had said of the dramatick Writers almost all that was alledged afterwards by Collier; but Blackmore's censure was cold and general, Collier's was personal and ardent; Blackmore taught his reader to dislike, what Collier incited him to abhor.

In his Preface to *King Arthur* he endeavoured to gain at least one friend, and propitiated Congreve by higher praise of his *Mourning Bride* than it has obtained from any other critick.

The same year he published a *Satire on Wit;* a proclamation of defiance which united the poets almost all against him, and which brought upon him harpoons and ridicule from every side. This he doubtless foresaw, and evi-

dently despised; nor should his dignity of mind be without its praise, had he not paid the homage to greatness, which he denied to genius, and degraded himself by conferring that authority over the national taste, which he takes from the poets, upon men of high rank and wide influence, but of less wit, and not greater virtue.

Here is again discovered the inhabitant of Cheapside, whose head cannot keep his poetry unmingled with trade. To hinder that intellectual bankruptcy which he affects to fear, he will erect a *Bank for Wit*.

In this poem he justly censured Dryden's impurities, but praised his powers; though in a subsequent edition he retained the satire and omitted the praise. What was his reason I know not; Dryden was then no longer in his way.

His head still teemed with heroic poetry, and (1705) he published *Eliza* in ten books. I am afraid that the world was now weary of contending about Blackmore's heroes; for I do not remember that by any author, serious or comical I have found *Eliza* either praised or blamed. She "dropped," as it seems, "dead born from the press." It is never mentioned, and was never seen by me till I borrowed it for the present occasion. Jacob says, "it "is corrected, and revised for another impression;" but the labour of revision was thrown away.

From this time he turned some of his thoughts to the celebration of living characters; and wrote a poem on the *Kit-cat club*, and *Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough*; but on occasion of another year of success, thinking himself qualified to give more instruction, he again wrote a poem of *Advice to a Weaver of Tapestry*. Steele was then publishing the *Tatler*; and looking round him for something at which he might laugh, unluckly lighted on Sir Richard's work, and treated it with such contempt, that, as Fenton observes, he put an end to the species of writers that gave *Advice to Painters*.

Not long after (1712) he published *Creation, a philosophical Poem*, which has been, by my recommendation, inserted in the late collection. Whoever judges of this by any other of Blackmore's performances, will do it injury. The praise given it by Addison (*Spec.* 339) is too well known to be transcribed; but some notice is due to the testimony of Dennis, who calls it a "philosophical Poem, which has equalled that of Lucretius in the beauty of "its versification, and infinitely surpassed it in the solidity and strength of "its reasoning."

Why an author surpasses himself, it is natural to enquire. I have heard from Mr. Draper an eminent bookseller, an account received by him from Ambrose Philips, "That Blackmore, as he proceeded in this poem, laid "his manuscript from time to time before a club of wits with whom he "associated;

" associated; and that every man contributed, as he could, either improve-
" ment or correction; so that, " said Philips, " there are perhaps no where
" in the book thirty lines together, that now stand as they were originally
" written."

The relation of Philips, I suppose, was true; but when all reasonable. all edible allowance is made for this friendly revision, the author will still ntain an ample dividend of praise; for to him must always be assigned the lan of the work, the distribution of its parts, the choice of topicks, the ain of argument, and, what is yet more, the general predominance of hilosophical judgement and poetical spirit. Correction seldom effects more an the suppression of faults: a happy line, or a single elegance, may perhaps be added; but of a large work the general character must always remain; the original constitution can be very little helped by local remedies; herent and radical dullness will never be much invigorated by intrinsick nimation.

This poem, if he had written nothing else, would have transmitted him to osterity among the first favourites of the English Muse: but to make verses as his transcending pleasure, and as he was not deterred by censure, he was ot satiated with praise.

He deviated, however, sometimes into other tracks of literature, and condescended to entertain his readers with plain prose. When the *Spectator* opped, he considered the polite world as destitute of entertainment; and concert with Mr. Hughes, who wrote every third paper, published three mes a week the *Lay Monastery*, founded on the supposition that some literary men, whose characters are described, had retired to a house in the county to enjoy philosophical leisure, and resolved to instruct the public, by communicating their disquisitions and amusements. Whether any real persons ere concealed under fictitious names, is not known. The hero of the club one Mr. Johnson; such a constellation of excellence, that his character all not be suppressed, though there is no great genius in the design, nor skill the delineation.

" The first I shall name is Mr. Johnson, a gentleman that owes to nature excellent faculties and an elevated genius, and to industry and application many acquired accomplishments. His taste is distinguishing, just, and delicate; his judgement clear, and his reason strong, accompanied with an imagination full of spirit, of great compass, and stored with refined ideas. He is a critick of the first rank: and, what is his peculiar ornament, he is delivered from the ostentation, malevolence, and supercilious temper, that so often blemish men of that character. His remarks result from the nature and reason of things, and are formed by a judgement free, and unbiassed by the authority of those who have lazily followed each other in the same beaten track of thinking, and are arrived only at the reputation of acute

" grammarians

" grammarians and commentators; men, who have been copying one anot
" many hundred years, without any improvement; or, if they have v
" tured farther, have only applied in a mechanical manner the rules of a
" ent criticks, to modern writings, and with great labour discovered not
" but their own want of judgement and capacity. As Mr. Johnson penetr
" to the bottom of his subject, by which means his observations are s
" and natural, as well as delicate, so his design is always to bring to li
" something useful and ornamental; whence his character is the revers
" theirs, who have eminent abilities in insignificant knowledge, and a g
" felicity in finding out trifles. He is no less indutrious to search out
" merit of an author, than sagacious in discerning his errors and defe
" and takes more pleasure in commending the beauties than exposing
" blemishes of a laudable writing: like Horace, in a long work, he can
" some deformities, and justly lay them on the imperfection of human na
" which is incapable of faultless productions. When an excellent *Dr*
" appears in publick, and by its intrinsick worth attracts a general appl
" he is not stung with envy and spleen; nor does he express a savage na
" in fastening upon the celebrated author, dwelling upon his imaginary
" fects, and passing over his conspicuous excellences. He treats all wr
" upon the same impartial foot; and is not, like the little criticks, take
" entirely in finding out only the beauties of the ancient, and nothing
" the errors of the modern writers. Never did any one express more l
" ness and good-nature to young and unfinished authors; he promotes
" interests, protects their reputation, extenuates their faults, and set
" their virtues, and by his candour guards them from the severity o
" judgement. He is not like those dry criticks who are morose because
" cannot write themselves, but is himself master of a good vein in po
" and though he does often employ it, yet he has sometimes entert
" his friends with his unpublished performances."

The rest of the *Lay Monks* seem to be but feeble Mortals, in compa with the gigantic Johnson; who yet, with all his abilities, and the he the fraternity, could drive the publication but to forty papers, which afterwards collected into a volume, and called in the title *A Sequel t Spectators.*

Some years afterwards (1716 and 1717) he published two volun Essays in prose, which can be commended only as they are written fo highest and noblest purpose, the promotion of religion. Blackmore's is not the prose of a poet; for it is languid, sluggish, and lifeles; his d

neither daring nor exact, his flow neither rapid nor easy, and his periods either smooth nor strong. His account of *Wit* will shew with how little earness he is content to think, and how little his thoughts are recommended his language.

" As to its efficient cause, *Wit* owes its production to an extraordinary and peculiar temperament in the constitution of the possessor of it, in which is found a concurrence of regular and exalted ferments, and an affluence of animal spirits, refined and rectified to a great degree of purity; whence, being endowed with vivacity, brightness, and celerity, as well in their reflections as direct motions, they become proper instruments for the sprightly operations of the mind; by which means the imagination can with great facility range the wide field of Nature, contemplate an infinite variety of objects, and, by observing the similitude and disagreement of their several qualities, single out and abstract, and then suit and unite those ideas which will best serve its purpose. Hence beautiful allusions, surprising metaphors, and admirable sentiments, are always ready at hand: and while the fancy is full of images collected from innumerable objects and their different qualities, relations, and habitudes, it can at pleasure dress a common notion in a strange but becoming garb; by which, as before observed, the same thought will appear a new one, to the great delight and wonder of the hearer. What we call *genius* results from this particular happy complexion in the formation of the first person that enjoys it, and is Nature's gift, but diversified by various specifick characters and limitations, as its active fire is blended and allayed by different proportions of phlegm, or reduced and regulated by the contrast of opposite ferments. Therefore, as there happens in the composition of facetious genius a greater or less, though still an inferior, degree of judgement and prudence, one man of wit will be varied and distinguished from another."

In these Essays he took little care to propitiate the wits; for he scorns to vert their malice at the expence of virtue or of truth.

" Several, in their books, have many sarcastical and spiteful strokes at religion in general; while others make themselves pleasant with the principles of the Christian. Of the last kind, this age has seen a most audacious example in the book entitled *A Tale of a Tub*. Had this writing been published in a pagan or popish nation, who are justly impatient of all indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved. But the fate of this impious buffoon is very different; for in a protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts and the effects of publick resentment, but has been ca-

" ressed

" ressed and patronized by persons of great figure, and of all denominations,
" Violent party-men, who differed in all things besides, agreed in their turn
" to shew particular respect and friendship to this insolent derider of the
" worship of his country, till at last the reputed writer is not only gone off
" with impunity, but triumphs in his dignity and preferment. I do not
" know that any inquiry or search was ever made after this writing, or that
" any reward was ever offered for the discovery of the author, or that the
" infamous book was ever condemned to be burnt in publick: whether this
" proceeds from the excessive esteem and love that men in power, during
" the late reign, had for wit, or their defect of zeal and concern for the
" Christian religion, will be determined best by those who are best ac-
" quainted with their character."

In another place he speaks with becoming abhorrence of a *godless author* who has burlesqued a Psalm. This author was supposed to be Pope, who published a reward for any one that would produce the coiner of the accusation, but never denied it; and was afterwards the perpetual and incessant enemy of Blackmore.

One of his Essays is upon the Spleen, which is treated by him so much to his own satisfaction, that he has published the same thoughts in the same words; first in the *Lay Monastery*; then in the Essay; and then in the Preface to a Medical Treatise on the Spleen. One passage, which I have found already twice, I will here exhibit, because I think it better imagined, and better expressed, than could be expected from the common tenour of his prose:

" —As the several combinations of splenetic madness and folly produce
" an infinite variety of irregular understanding, so the amicable accommoda-
" tion and alliance between several virtues and vices produce an equal di-
" versity in the dispositions and manners of mankind; whence it comes to
" pass, that as many monstrous and absurd productions are found in the
" moral as in the intellectual world. How surprising is it to observe among
" the least culpable men, some whose minds are attracted by heaven and
" earth, with a seeming equal force; some who are proud of humility;
" others who are censorious and uncharitable, yet self-denying and devout;
" some who join contempt of the world with sordid avarice; and others,
" who preserve a great degree of piety, with ill-nature and ungoverned
" passions; nor are instances of this inconsistent mixture less frequent among
" bad men, where we often, with admiration, see persons at once gene-
" rous and unjust, impious lovers of their country, and flagitious heroes,
" good-natured sharpers, immoral men of honour, and libertines who
" will sooner die than change their religion; and though it is true that

" repugnant

repugnant coalitions of so high a degree are found but in a part of mankind yet none of the whole mass, either good or bad, are intirely exempted from some absurd mixture."

He about this time (Aug. 22, 1716) became one of the *Elects* of the College of Physicians; and was soon after (Oct. 1.) chosen *Censor*. He seems to have arrived late, whatever was the reason, at his medical honours.

Having succeeded so well in his book on *Creation*, by which he established the great principle of all Religion, he thought his undertaking imperfect, unless he likewise enforced the truth of Revelation; and for that purpose added another poem on *Redemption*. He had likewise written, before his *Creation*, three books on the *Nature of Man*.

The lovers of musical devotion have always wished for a more happy metrical version than they have yet obtained of the book of Psalms: this wish the piety of Blackmore led him to gratify; and he produced (1721) *a new Version of the* Psalms *of* David, *fitted to the Tunes used in Churches*; which, being recommended by the archbishops and many bishops, obtained a licence for its admission into publick worship; but no admission has it yet obtained, nor has it any right to come where Brady and Tate have got possession. Blackmore's name must be added to those of many others, who, by the same attempt, have obtained only the praise of meaning well.

He was not yet deterred from heroick poetry; there was another monarch of this island, for he did not fetch his heroes from foreign countries, whom he considered as worthy of the Epic muse, and he dignified Alfred (1723) with twelve books. But the opinion of the nation was now settled; a hero introduced by Blackmore was not likely to find either respect or kindness; *Alfred* took his place by *Eliza* in silence and darkness: benevolence was ashamed to favour, and malice was weary of insulting. Of his four Epic Poems, the first had such reputation and popularity as enraged the criticks; the second was at least known enough to be ridiculed; the two last had neither friends nor enemies.

Contempt is a kind of gangrene, which if it seizes one part of a character corrupts all the rest by degrees. Blackmore, being despised as a poet, was in time neglected as a physician; his practice, which was once invidiously great, forsook him in the latter part of his life; but being by nature, or by principle, averse from idleness, he employed his unwelcome leisure in writing books on physick, and teaching others to cure those whom he could himself cure no longer. I know not whether I can enumerate all the treatises by which he has endeavoured to diffuse the art of healing; for there is scarcely any distemper, of dreadful name, which he has not taught the reader how to oppose. He has written on the small-pox, with a vehement

ment invective against inoculation; on consumptions, the spleen, the gout, the rheumatism, the king's-evil, the dropsy, the jaundice, the stone, the diabetes, and the plague.

Of those books, if I had read them, it could not be expected that I should be able to give a critical account. I have been told that there is something in them of vexation and discontent, discovered by a perpetual attempt to degrade physick from its sublimity, and to represent it as attainable without much previous or concomitant learning. By the transient glances which I have thrown upon them, I have observed an affected contempt of the Ancients, and a supercilious derision of transmitted knowledge. Of this indecent arrogance the following quotation from his preface to the Treatise on the Small-pox will afford a specimen: in which, when the reader finds, what I fear is true, that when he was censuring Hippocrates he did not know the difference between *aphorism* and *apophthegm*, he will not pay much regard to his determinations concerning ancient learning.

"As for this book of Aphorisms, it is like my lord Bacon's of the same "title, a book of jests, or a grave collection of trite and trifling observati-"ons; of which though many are true and certain, yet they signify no-"thing, and may afford diversion, but no instruction; most of them being "much inferior to the sayings of the wise men of Greece, which yet are so "low and mean, that we are entertained every day with more valuable sen-"timents at the table conversation of ingenious and learned men.

I am unwilling, however, to leave him in total disgrace, and will therefore quote from another Preface a passage less reprehensible.

"Some gentlemen have been disingenuous and unjust to me, by wresting "and forcing my meaning in the Preface to another book, as if I con-"demned and exposed all learning, though they knew I declared that I "greatly honoured and esteemed all men of superior literature and erudi-"tion; and that I only undervalued false or superficial learning, that sig-"nifies nothing for the service of mankind; and that, as to physick, I ex-"pressly affirmed that learning must be joined with native genius to make "a physician of the first rank; but if those talents are separated, I asserted, "and do still insist, that a man of native sagacity and diligence will prove a "more able and useful practiser, than a heavy notional scholar, encumbered "with a heap of confused ideas."

He was not only a poet and a physician, but produced likewise a work of a different kind, *A true and impartial History of the Conspiracy against King* William *of glorious Memory, in the year* 1695. This I have never seen, but suppose it at least compiled with integrity. He engaged likewise in theological controversy, and wrote two books against the Arians; *Just Prejudices against the* Arian *Hypothesis*; and *Modern* Arians *unmasked*. Another of his works is *Natural Theology or Moral Duties considered a part from Positive*; *with*

*with some Observations on the Desirableness and Necessity of a supernatural Revelation.* This was the last book that he published. He left behind him *The accomplished Preacher, or an Essay upon Divine Eloquence;* which was printed after his death by Mr. White of Nayland in Essex, the minister who attended his death-bed, and testified the fervent piety of his last hours. He died on the eighth of October, 1729.

BLACKMORE, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dullness, has been exposed to worse treatment than he deserved; his name was so long used to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at last a bye-word of contempt; but it deserves observation, that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life passed without reproach, even when his boldness of reprehension naturally turned upon him many eyes desirous to espy faults, which many tongues would have made haste to publish. But those who could not blame, could at least forbear to praise, and therefore of his private life and domestick character there are no memorials.

As an author he may justly claim the honours of magnanimity. The incessant attacks of his enemies, whether serious or merry, are never discovered to have disturbed his quiet, or to have lessened his confidence in himself: they neither awaked him to silence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depressed him to complaint. While the distributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either despised or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aside to quiet them by civility, or repress them by confutation.

He depended with great security on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reason less diligent in perusing books. His literature was, I think, but small. What he knew of antiquity, I suspect him to have gathered from modern compilers: but, though he could not boast of much critical knowledge, his mind was stored with general principles, and he left minute researches to those whom he considered as little minds.

With this disposition he wrote most of his poems. Having formed a magnificent design, he was careless of particular and subordinate elegancies; he studied no niceties of versification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his first thoughts in his first words in which they were presented: nor does it appear that he saw beyond his own performances, or had ever elevated his ideas to that ideal perfection, which every genius born to excel is condemned always to pursue, and never overtake. In the first suggestions of his imagination he acquiesced; he thought them good, and did not seek for better. His works may be read a long time without the occurrence of a single line that stands prominent from the rest.

The poem on *Creation* has, however, the appearance of more circumspection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction: it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot

be imagined of so long a work, with such felicity as made care less necessary.

Its two constituent parts are ratiocination and description. To reason in verse, is allowed to be difficult; but Blackmore not only reasons in verse, but very often reasons poetically: and finds the art of uniting ornament with strength, and ease with closeness. This is a skill which Pope might have condescended to learn from him, when he needed it so much in his Moral Essays.

In his description both of life and nature, the poet and the philosopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance sustained by truth.

In the structure and order of the poem, not only the greater parts are properly consecutive, but the didactick and illustrative paragraphs are so happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleasure, and the attention is led on through a long succession of varied excellence to the original position, the fundamental principle of wisdom and of virtue.

As the heroick poems of Blackmore are now little read, it is thought proper to insert, as a specimen from *Prince Arthur*, the song of *Mopas* mentioned by Molineux.

But that which Arthur with most pleasure heard,
Were noble strains, by Mopas sung the bard,
Who to his harp in lofty verse began,
And through the secret maze of nature ran.
He the great Spirit sung, that all things fill'd,
That the tumultuous waves of Chaos still'd;
Whose nod dispos'd the jarring seeds to peace,
And made the wars of hostile Atoms cease.
All Beings, we in fruitful Nature find,
Proceeded from the great Eternal mind;
Streams of his unexhausted spring of power,
And cherish'd with his influence, endure.
He spread the pure cerulean fields on high,
And arch'd the chambers of the vaulted sky,
Which he, to suit their glory with their height,
Adorn'd with globes, that reel, as drunk with light.
His hand directed all the tuneful spheres,
He turn'd their orbs, and polish'd all the stars.
He fill'd the Sun's vast lamp with golden light,
And bid the silver Moon adorn the night.
He spread the airy Ocean without shores,
Where birds are wafted with their feather'd oars.
Then sung the bard, how the light vapours rise
From the warm earth, and cloud the smiling skies.
He sung how some, chill'd in their airy flight,
Fall scatter'd down in pearly dew by night;
How some, rais'd higher, sit in secret steams
On the reflect'd points of bounding beams,
Till, chill'd with cold, they shade th' etherial plain,
Then on the thirsty earth descend in rain;
How some, whose parts a slight contexture show,
Still hovering through the air, in fleecy snow;

How

How part is spun in silken threads, and clinge
Entangled in the grass in glewy strings;
How others stamp to stones, with rushing sound
Fall from their crystal quarries to the ground;
How some are laid in trains, that kindled fly
In harmless fires by night, about the sky;
How some in winds blow with impetuous force,
And carry ruin where they bend their course,
While some conspire to form a gentle breese,
To fan the air, and play among the trees;
How some, enrag'd, grow turbulent and loud,
Pent in the bowels of a frowning cloud;
That cracks, as if the axis of the world
Was broke, and heaven's bright towers were downwards hurl'd.
He sung how earth's wide ball, at Jove's command,
Did in the midst on airy columns stand;
And how the soul of plants, in prison held,
And bound with sluggish fetters, lies conceal'd,
Till with the spring's warm beams, almost releas'd
From the dull weight, with which it lay opprest,
Its vigour spreads, and makes the teeming earth
Heave up, and labour with the sprouting birth:
The active spirit freedom seeks in vain,
It only works and twists a stronger chain.
Urging its prison's sides to break a way,
It makes that wider, where 'tis forc'd to stay.
Till, having form'd its living house, it rears
Its head, and in a tender plant appears.
Hence springs the oak, the beauty of the grove,
Whose stately trunk fierce storms can scarcely move.
Hence grows the cedar, hence the swelling vine,
Does round the elm its purple clusters twine.
Hence painted flowers the smiling garden bless,
Both with their fragrant scent and gaudy dress.
Hence the white lily in full beauty grows,
Hence the blue violet, and blushing rose.
He sung how sun-beams brood upon the earth,
And in the glebe hatch such a numerous birth;
Which way the genial warmth in Summer storms
Turns putrid vapours to a bed of worms;
How rain, transform'd by this prolifick power,
Falls from the clouds an animated shower.
He sung the embryo's growth within the womb,
And how the parts their various shapes assume.
With what rare art the wonderous structure's wrought,
From one crude mass to such perfection brought;
That no part useless, none misplac'd we see,
None are forgot, and more would monstrous be.

# FENTON.

THE brevity with which I am to write the account of ELIJ FENTON is not the effect of indifference or negligence. I have so intelligence among his relations in his native country, but have not obta it. He was born near Newcastle in Staffordshire, of an ancient fan whose estate was very considerable; but he was the youngest of twelve dren, and being therefore necessarily destined to some lucrative employm was sent first to school, and afterwards to Cambridge *, but, with n other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate sulted conscience, whether well or ill informed, more than interest, he dc ed the legality of the government, and, refusing to qualify himself for lick employment by the oaths required, left the university without a deg but I never heard that the enthusiasm of opposition impelled him to sep tion from the church.

By this perverseness of integrity he was driven out a commoner of Na excluded from the regular modes of profit and prosperity; and reduce pick up a livehood uncertain and fortuitous; but it must be rememt that he kept his name unsullied, and never suffered himself to be reduced, too many of the same sect, to mean arts and dishonourable shifts. Whc mentioned Fenton, mentioned him with honour.

The life that passes in penury, must necessarily pass in obscurity. It is possible to trace Fenton from year to year, or to discover what mean used for his support He was a while secretary to Charles earl of Orre Flanders, and tutor to his young son, who afterwards mentioned him great esteem and tenderness. He was at one time assistant in the scho Mr. Bonwicke in Surrey; and at another kept a school for himself a Wenoaks in Kent, which he brought into reputation; but was persuad leave it (1710) by Mr. St. John, with promises of a more honourable ployment.

His opinions, as he was a Nonjuror, seem not to have been remar rigid. He wrote with great zeal and affection the praises of queen A and very willingly and liberally extolled the duke of Marlborough, wh was (1707) at the height of his glory.

* He was entered at Jesus College, and took a Batchelor's degree in 1704. H.

He expressed still more attention to Marlborough and his family by an elegiac Pastoral on the marquis of Blandford, which could be prompted only by respect or kindness; for neither the duke nor dutchess desired the praise, or asked the cost of patronage.

The elegance of his poetry entitled him to the company of the wits of his time, and the amiableness of his manners made him loved wherever he was known. Of his friendship to Southern and Pope there are lasting monuments.

He published in 1707 a collection of poems.

By Pope he was once placed in a station that might have been of great advantage. Craggs, when he was advanced to be secretary of state (about 1720), feeling his own want of literature, desired Pope to procure him an instructor, by whose help he might supply the deficiencies of his education. Pope recommended Fenton, in whom Craggs found all that he was seeking. There was now a prospect of ease and plenty, for Fenton had merit, and Craggs had generosity; but the small-pox suddenly put an end to the pleasing expectation.

When Pope, after the great success of his *Iliad*, undertook the *Odyssey*, being, as it seems, weary of translating, he determined to engage auxiliaries. Twelve books he took to himself, and twelve he distributed between Broome and Fenton: the books allotted to Fenton were the first, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth. It is observable, that he did not take the eleventh, which he had before translated into blank verse; neither did Pope claim it, but committed it to Broome. How the two associates performed their parts is well known to the readers of poetry, who have never been able to distinguish their books from those of Pope.

In 1723 was performed his tragedy of *Mariamne*; to which Southern, at whose house it was written, is said to have contributed such hints as his theatrical experience supplied. When it was shewn to Cibber, it was rejected by him, with the additional insolence of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employment of honest labour, by which he might obtain that support which he could never hope from his poetry. The play was acted at the other theatre; and the brutal petulance of Cibber was confuted, though, perhaps, not shamed, by general applause. Fenton's profits are said to have amounted to near a thousand pounds, with which he discharged a debt contracted by his attendance at court.

Fenton seems to have had some peculiar system of versification. *Mariamne* is written in lines of ten syllables, with few of those redundant terminations which the drama not only admits but requires, as more nearly approaching to real dialogue. The tenor of his verse is so uniform that it cannot be thought casual; and yet upon what principle he so constructed it, is difficult to discover.

The

The mention of his play brings to my mind a very trifling occurrence. Fenton was one day in the company of Broome his associate, and Ford, a clergyman, at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and dissolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise. They determined all to see the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was acted that night; and Fenton, as a dramatick poet, took them to the stage-door; where the door-keeper enquiring who they were, was told that they were three very necessary men, Ford, Broome, and Fenton. The name in the play, which Pope restored to *Brook*, was then *Broome*.

It was perhaps after this play that he undertook to revise the punctuation of Milton's Poems, which, as the author neither wrote the original copy nor corrected the press, was supposed capable of amendment. To this edition he prefixed a short and elegant account of Milton's life, written at once with tenderness and integrity.

He published likewise (1729) a very splendid edition of Waller, with notes often useful, often entertaining, but too much extended by long quotations from Clarendon. Illustrations drawn from a book so easily consulted, should be made by reference rather than transcription.

The latter part of his life was calm and pleasant. The relict of Sir William Trumbull invited him, by Pope's recommendation, to educate her son; whom he first instructed at home, and then attended to Cambridge. The lady afterwards detained him with her as the auditor of her accounts. He often wandered to London, and amused himself with the conversation of his friends.

He died in 1730, at Easthampstead in Berkshire, the seat of the lady Trumbull; and Pope, who had been always his friend, honoured him with an epitaph, of which he borrowed the two first lines from Crashaw.

Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not lessen by much exercise; for he was very sluggish and sedentary, rose late, and when he had risen sat down to his book or papers. A woman that once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as she said, that he would "lie a-bed, "and be fed with a spoon." This, however, was not the worst that might have been prognosticated; for Pope says, in his Letters, that "he died of "indolence;" but his immediate distemper was the gout.

Of his morals and his conversation the account is uniform: he was never named but with praise and fondness as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope *; and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.

By

* Spence.

a former writer of his Life a story is told, which ought not to be for-
ı. He used, in the latter part of his time, to pay his relations in the
ry a yearly visit. At an entertainment made for the family by his elder
er, he observed, that one of his sisters, who had married unfortunately,
bsent; and found, upon enquiry, that distress had made her thought
rthy of invitation. As she was at no great distance, he refused to sit at
ible till she was called, and, when she had taken her place, was careful
ew her particular attention.

s collection of poems is now to be considered. The ode to the *Sun* is
:n upon a common plan, without uncommon sentiments; but its greatest
is its length. No poem should be long of which the purpose is only to
: the fancy without enlightening the understanding by precept, ratiocina-
or narrative. A blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight.

*Florelio* it is sufficient to say, that it is an occasional pastoral, which
es something neither natural nor artificial, neither comick nor serious.
ıe next ode is irregular, and therefore defective. As the sentiments are
, they cannot easily be new; for what can be added to topicks on which
ssive ages have been employed!

the *Paraphrase on Isaiah* nothing very favourable can be said. Sub-
and solemn prose gains little by a change to blank verse; and the para-
it has deserted his original, by admitting images not Asiatick, at least
udaical:

——Returning Peace,
Dove eyed, and rob'd in white—

his petty poems some are very trifling, without any thing to be praised
r in the thought or expression. He is unlucky in his competition; he
:he same idle tale with Congreve, and does not tell it so well. He trans-
from Ovid the same epistle as Pope; but I am afraid not with equal
iness.

examine his performances one by one would be tedious. His translati-
om Homer into blank verse will find few readers while another can be
ı rhyme. The piece addressed to Lambarde is no disagreeable specimen
istolary poetry; and his ode to the lord Gower was pronounced by Pope
ext ode in the English language to Dryden's Cecilia. Fenton may be
styled an excellent versifier and a good poet.

WHAT-

WHATEVER I have said of Fenton is confirmed by Pope in a le by which he communicated to Broome an account of his death.

TO

The Revd. Mr. BROOME

PULHAM, near HARLESTON.

NOR

SUFFOLKE

By BECCLES Bag.

DR Sir.

I Intended to write to you on this melancholy subject, the death of Fenton, before yrs came; but stayed to have informed myself and y ye circumstances of it. All I hear is, that he felt a gradual Decay, tl early in Life, and was declining for 5 or 6 months. It was not, as I a hended, the Gout in his Stomach, but I believe rather a Complicatio of Gross humours, as he was naturally corpulent, not dicharging thems as he used no sort of Exercise. No man better bore ye approaches Dissolution (as I am told) or with less ostentation yielded up his I The great Modesty wch you know was natural to him, and ye great tempt he had for all sorts of Vanity and Parade, never appeared more in his last moments: He had a conscious Satisfaction (no doubt) in right, in feeling himself honest, true, & un-pretending to more tha his own. So he dyed, as he lived with that secret, yet sufficient, Co ment.

As to any Papers left behind him, I dare say they can be but few; f reason, He never wrote out of Vanity, or thought much of the Appla men. I know an Instance where he did his utmost to conceal hi merit that way; and if we join to this his natural Love of Ease I fan must expect little of this sort: at least I hear of none except some few f remarks on Waller (wch his cautious integrity made him leave an order given to Mr. Tonson) and perhaps, tho tis many years since I saw it, a T lation of the first Book of Oppian. He had begun a Tragedy of Dior made small progress in it.

As to his other Affairs, he died poor, but honest, leaving no Del Legacies; except of a few pds to Mr. Trumbull and my Lady, in of respect, Gratefulness, and mutual Esteem.

I shall with pleausure take upon me to draw this amiable, quiet, dese unpretending Christian and Philosophical character, in His Epitaph. T Truth may be spoken in a few words: as for Flourish, & Oratory, & P I leave them to younger, and more lively writers, such as love writin writing sake, & wd rather show their own Fine Parts, yn Report the able ones of any other man. So the Elegy I renounce.

I condole with you from my heart, on the loss of so worthy a man, and Friend to us both. Now he is gone, I must tell you he has done you many a good office, and set your character in the fairest light, to some who either mistook you, or knew you not. I doubt not he has done the same for me.

Adieu: Let us love his Memory, and profit by his Example. I am very sincerely,

DR. SIR

Your affectionate

And real Servant,

Aug. 29th, 1730.

A. POPE.

# G A Y.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manour of * Goldworthy in-Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstable, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk-mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The dutchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary: by quitting a shop for such service, he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay, found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rusticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele, in some papers of the *Guardian*, had praised Ambrose Philips, as the pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published Pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison

* *Goldworthy* does not appear in the *Villare*. Dr. J.

of

of his own compositions with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write the *Shepherd's Week*, to shew, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reasonable; but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with such imitation as they could attain of obsolete language, and by consequence in a style that was never spoken nor written in any language or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to shew them groveling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the stage, but it received no applause: he printed it, however, and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the public taste, he offered it again to the town; but, though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the house of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princess of Wales, he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour, that both the Prince and Princess went to see his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comic, and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience, that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffin, a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called *The Key to the What d'ye call it*; which, says Gay, "calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave."

But Fortune has been always inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three hours after Marriage*; a comedy written, as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a

crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off t stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depress when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; b it may naturally imply something more generally welcome, a soft and civ companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to plea them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own wa commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at t *What d'ye call it* would raise the fortune of its author; and, finding nothi done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. Th earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire: the year after, M Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year lord Harcourt invit him to his seat, where, during his visit, two rural lovers were killed wi lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems by subscri tion with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds; and called h friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it. Lewis, t steward of lord Oxford, advised him to entrust it to the funds, and live up the interest; Arbuthnot bade him intrust it to Providence, and live upon t principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase annuity.

Gay in that disastrous year * had a present from young Craggs of so South-sea-stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousa pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. H was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase an hundred a y for life, "which," says Fenton, "will make you sure of a clean shirt a "a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was rejected: the pr and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that l life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn p ticular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before t princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her dies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any oth attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weigh Japan screen, the princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay, af all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives*, which was acted at Drury-Lane in 1723-4, know not †; but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (17

* Spence.

† It was acted seven nights. The Author's third night was by command of their Royal Highne

o write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumerland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had oubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay as to be great and happy; but on the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman usher to the princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There seem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour; and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her interest for his promotion; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries, were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it, being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of *making* Gay *rich*, and Rich *gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

"Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty sort of a thing a Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time; but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan. This was what gave rise to the *Beggar's Opera*. He began on it; and when first he mentioned it to Swift, the Doctor did not much like the project. As he carried it on, he shewed what he wrote to both of us, and we now and then gave a correction, or a word or two of advice; but it was wholly of his own writing.—When it was done, neither of us thought it would succeed.—We shewed it to Congreve; who, after reading it over, said, It would either take greatly, or be damned confoundedly.—We were all, at the first night of it, in great uncertainty of the event; till we were very much encouraged by over-hearing the duke of Argyle, who sat in the next box to us, say, 'It will do—it must do! I see it in the eyes of them.' This was a good while before the first act was over, and so gave us ease soon; for that duke (besides his own good taste) has a particular knack, as any one now living, in discovering the taste of the publick. He was quite right in this, as usual; the good-nature of the audience appeared stronger and stronger every act, and ended in a clamour of applause."

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad*:

"This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of England; was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth

"tieth time; at Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made its progress into Wale
"Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days succes
"sively. The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it i
"fans, and houses were furnished with it in screens. The fame of it wa
"not confined to the author only. The person who acted Polly, till then
"obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town; her pictures were
"engraved, and sold in great numbers; her Life written, books of letter
"and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and
"jests. Furthermore, it drove out of England (for that season) the Italian
"Opera, which had carried all before it for ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, ac cording to the different opinions of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece that "placed all kinds of vice in "the strongest and most odious light;" but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said, that, after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera*, the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is there fore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more specula tion than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the play-house, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection however, or some other rather political than moral, ob tained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was profit of the second.

He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the duke and duchess of Queensberry, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. * The duke, considering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the Court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual cholick, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent

* Spence.

fit

at last seized him, and carried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, ith more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of ecember 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which ought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopen-, because when he received it, he was impress with the preconception of me misfortune.

After his death, was published a second volume of Fables more political han the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were giv- to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for e died without a will, though he had gathered * three thousand pounds. here have appeared likewise under his name a comedy called the *Distrest Wife*, and the *Rehearsal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope * is this, that "he was a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it;" nd that "he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great;" which caution, however, says Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a fe- ale critic remark, "of a lower order." He had not in any great degree e *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius. Much however must be allowed the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the high- st kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at rst was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the expe- ence of half a century been found so well accommodated to the disposition a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. hether this new drama was the product of judgment or of luck, the praise it must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with ore reverence, to whom such merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, the *Rural Sports*, is such as was easily planned and xecuted; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The *Fan* is one of hose mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand, but hich, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. he attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Mi- erva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for having published one olume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors o not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evi- ently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegorical rosopopœias*. A *Fable*, or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration, ems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative, in which beings irrational, and metimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpose moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and ssions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always con-

* Spence.

form.

form. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale, or an abstracted Allegory; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness; the versification is smooth; and the diction, though now-and-then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims; it is sprightly, various, and pleasant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away. An honest black-smith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous; a shoeboy could have been produced by the casual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal; and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions, and on small, the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood.

Of his little Poems the public judgment seems to be right; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. The story of the Apparition is borrowed from one of the tales of Poggio. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

*Dione* is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Pastor Fido*, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event; but the style of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the poetical *Arcadia* so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support its representation through a long work. A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers, and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such scenes please barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned.

GRANVILLE.

# GRANVILLE.

OF GEORGE GRANVILLE, or as others write *Greenville*, or *Granville*, afterwards lord Landsdowne of Biddeford in the county of Devon, less is known than his name and rank might give reason to expect. He was born about 1667, the son of Bernard Greenville, who was entrusted by Monk with the most private transactions of the Restoration, and the grandson of Sir Bevil Greenville, who died in the King's cause, at the battle of Landsdowne.

His early education was superintended by Sir William Ellis; and his progress was such that before the age of twelve he was sent to Cambridge*, where he pronounced a copy of his own verses to the princess Mary d'Este of Modena, then dutchess of York, when she visited the university.

At the accession of king James, being now at eighteen, he again exerted his poetical powers, and addressed the new monarch in three short pieces, of which the first is profane, and the two others such as a boy might be expected to produce; but he was commended by old Waller, who perhaps was pleased to find himself imitated, in six lines, which, though they begin with nonsense and end with dulness, excited in the young author a rapture of acknowledgment,

In numbers such as Waller's self might use.

It was probably about this time that he wrote the poem to the earl of Peterborough, upon his *accomplishment* of the duke of York's marriage with the princess of Modena, whose charms appear to have gained a strong precedence over his imagination, and upon whom nothing ever has been charged but imprudent piety, an intemperate and misguided zeal for the propagation of popery.

However faithful Granville might have been to the king, or however enamoured of the Queen, he has left no reason for supposing that he approved

* To Trinity College. By the university Register, it appears, that he was admitted to his Master's Degree in 1679: we must, therefore, set the year of his birth some years back. H.

either the artifices or the violence with which the King's religion was insinuated or obtruded. He endeavoured to be true at once to the King and to the Church.

Of this regulated loyalty he has transmitted to posterity a sufficient proof, in the letter which he wrote to his father about a month before the prince of Orange landed.

" Mar, near Doncaster, Oct. 6, 1688.

" To the honourable Mr Barnard Granville, at the earl of Bathe's, St. " James's.

" SIR,

" Your having no prospect of obtaining a commission for me, can no " way alter or cool my desire at this important juncture to venture my life, " in some manner or other, for my King and my Country.

" I cannot bear living under the reproach of lying obscure and idle in a " country retirement, when every man who has the least sense of honour " should be preparing for the field.

" You may remember, Sir, with what reluctance I submitted to your " commands upon Monmouth's rebellion, when no importunity could pre- " vail with you to permit me to leave the Academy: I was too young to be " hazarded; but, give me leave to say, it is glorious at any age to die for " one's country, and the sooner the nobler the sacrifice.

" I am now older by three years. My uncle Bathe was not so old when " he was left among the slain at the battle of Newbury; nor you yourself, " Sir, when you made your escape from your tutor's, to join your brother " at the defence of Scilly.

" The same cause is now come round about again. The king has been " misled; let those who have misled him be answerable for it. Nobody " can deny but he is sacred in his own person; and it is every honest man's " duty to defend it.

" You are pleased to say, it is yet doubtful if the Hollanders are rash " enough to make such an attempt; but, be that as it will, I beg leave to " insist upon it, that I may be presented to his Majesty, as one whose utmost " ambition it is to devote his life to his service, and my country's, after " the example of all my ancestors.

" The gentry assembled at York, to agree upon the choice of represen- " tatives for the county, have prepared an address, to assure his majesty " they are ready to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for him upon this and " all other occasions; but at the same time they humbly beseech him to " give them such magistrates as may be agreeable to the laws of the land; for, " at present, there is no authority to which they can legally submit.

" They have been beating up for volunteers at York, and the towns ad- " jacent, to supply the regiments at Hull; but nobody will list.

" By

"By what I can hear, every body wishes well to the King; but they would be glad his ministers were hanged.

"The winds continue so contrary, that no landing can be so soon as was apprehended; therefore I may hope with your leave and assistance, to be in readiness before any action can begin. I beseech you, Sir, most humbly and most earnestly, to add this one act of indulgence more to so many other testimonies which I have constantly received of your goodness; and be pleased to believe me always with the utmost duty and submission, Sir,

"Your most dutiful son,
"and most obedient servant,
"GEO. GRANVILLE."

Through the whole reign of king William he is supposed to have lived a literary retirement, and indeed had for some time few other pleasures but those of study in his power. He was, as the biographers observe, the younger son of a younger brother; a denomination by which our ancestors proverbially expressed the lowest state of penury and dependance. He is said, however, to have preserved himself at this time from disgrace and difficulties by œconomy, which he forgot or neglected in life more advanced, and in better fortune.

About this time he became enamoured of the countess of Newburgh, whom he has celebrated with so much ardour by the name of Mira. He wrote verses to her before he was three-and-twenty, and may be forgiven if he regarded the face more than the mind. Poets are sometimes in too much haste to praise.

In the time of his retirement it is probable that he composed his dramatick pieces, the *She-Gallants* (acted 1696), which he revised, and called *Once a Lover, and always a Lover; The Jew of Venice*, altered from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1698); *Heroic Love*, a tragedy (1701); *The British Enchanters* (1706), a dramatick poem; and *Peleus and Thetis*, a masque, written to accompany *The Jew of Venice*.

The comedies, which he has not printed in his own edition of his works, I never saw. *Once a Lover, and always a Lover*, is said to be in a great degree indecent and gross. Granville could not admire without bigotry; he copied the wrong as well as the right from his masters, and may be supposed to have learned obscenity from Wycherley, as he learned mythology from Waller.

In his *Jew of Venice*, as Rowe remarks, the character of *Shylock* is made comick, and we are prompted to laughter instead of detestation.

It is evident that *Heroic Love* was written, and presented on the stage, before the death of Dryden. It is a mythological tragedy, upon the love of Agamemnon and Chryseis, and therefore easily sunk into neglect, though praised in verse by Dryden, and in prose by Pope.

It is concluded by the wise Ulysses with this speech:

> Fate holds the strings, and men like children move
> But as they're led; success is from above.

At the accession of queen Anne, having his fortune improved by h from his father, and his uncle the earl of Bathe, he was chosen in liament for Fowey. He soon after engaged in a joint translation of t *vectives against Philip*, with a design, surely weak and puerile, of t the thunder of Demosthenes upon the head of Lewis.

He afterwards (in 1706) had his estate again augmented by an inhe from his elder brother, Sir Bevil Granville, who, as he returned fr government of Barbadoes, died at sea. He continued to serve in ment; and in the ninth year of queen Anne was chosen knight of th for Cornwall.

At the memorable change of the ministry (1710), he was made se at war, in the place of Mr. Robert Walpole.

Next year, when the violence of party made twelve peers in a da Granville became *Lord Landsdowne*, *Baron Biddeford*, by a promotio remarked to be not invidious, because he was the heir of a family in two peerages, that of the earl of Bath and lord Granville of Poth had lately become extinct. Being now high in the Queen's favour, he was appointed comptroller of the household, and a privy counsello to his other honours were added the dedication of Pope's *Windsor* He was advanced next year to be treasurer of the household.

Of these favours he soon lost all but his title; for at the accession George his place was given to the earl of Cholmondeley, and he was pe ed with the rest of his party. Having protested against the bill for at Ormond and Bolingbroke, he was, after the insurrection in Scotland, Sept. 26, 1715, as a suspected man, and confined in the Tower ti 8, 1717, when he was at last released, and restored to his seat in parli where (1719) he made a very ardent and animated speech against th of the bill to prevent Occasional Conformity, which, however, th was then printed, he has not inserted it into his works.

Some time afterwards (about 1722), being perhaps embarrassed by l fusion, he went into foreign countries, with the usual pretence of rec his health. In this state of leisure and retirement, he received the f lume of Burnet's History, of which he cannot be supposed to h proved the general tendency, and where he thought himself able t some particular falsehoods. He therefore undertook the vindicatio neral Monk from some calumnies of Dr. Burnet, and some misrep tions of Mr. Echard. This was answered civilly by Mr. Thomas and Oldmixon; and more roughly by Dr. Colbatch.

His other historical performance is a defence of his relation Sir J Grenville, whom lord Clarendon has shewn in a form very unamiab

uch is urged in this apology, to justify many actions that have been repre-nted as culpable, and to palliate the rest, that the reader is reconciled for ıe greater part; and it is made very probable that Clarendon was by per-nal enmity disposed to think the worst of Greenville, as Greenville was so very willing to think the worst of Clarendon. These pieces were pub-shed at his return to England.

Being now desirous to conclude his labours, and enjoy his reputation, e published (1732) a very beautiful and splendid edition of his works, in hich he omitted what he disapproved, and enlarged what seemed deficient.

He now went to Court, and was kindly received by queen Caroline; to hom and to the princess Anne he presented his works, with verses on the ank leaves, with which he concluded his poetical labours.

He died in Hanover-square, Jan. 30, 1735, having a few days before uried his wife, the lady Anne Villers, widow to Mr. Thynne, by whom e had four daughters, but no son.

Writers commonly derive their reputation from their works; but there re works which owe their reputation to the character of the writer. The ublick sometimes has its favourites, whom it rewards for one species of xcellence with the honours due to another. From him whom we reverence r his beneficence we do not willingly withhold the praise of genius; a an of exalted merit becomes at once an accomplished writer, as a beauty ads no great difficulty in passing for a wit.

Granville was a man illustrious by his birth, and therefore attracted notice: ince he is by Pope styled "the polite," he must be supposed elegant in his anners, and generally loved: he was in times of contest and turbulence eady to his party, and obtained that esteem which is always conferred up-n firmness and consistency. With those advantages, having learned the art f versifying, he declared himself a poet; and the claim to the laurel was llowed.

But by a critick of a later generation who takes up his book without any vourable prejudices, the praise already received will be thought sufficient; or his works do not shew him to have had much comprehension from na-ure, or illumination from learning. He seems to have had no ambition bove the imitation of Waller, of whom he has copied the faults, and very ittle more. He is for ever amusing himself with the puerilities of mytho-ogy; his King is Jupiter, who, if the Queen brings no children, has a arren Juno. The Queen is compounded of Juno, Venus, and Minerva. His poem on the dutchess of Grafton's lawsuit, after having rattled a while with Juno and Pallas, Mars and Alcides, Cassiope, Niobe, and the Pro-petides, Hercules, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, at last concludes its folly with profaneness.

His verses to Mira, which are most frequently mentioned, have little in them of either art or nature, of the sentiments of a lover, or the language of

of a poet: there may be found now-and-then a happier effort; but the are commonly feeble and unaffecting, or forced and extravagant.

His little pieces are seldom either sprightly or elegant, either keen o weighty. They are trifles written by idleness, and published by vanity But his Prologues and Epilogues have a just claim to praise.

The *Progress of Beauty* seems one of his most elaborate pieces, and is no deficient in splendour and gaiety; but the merit of original thought is wan ing. Its highest praise is the spirit with which he celebrates king James' consort, when she was queen no longer.

The *Essay on unnatural Flights in Poetry* is not inelegant nor injudicious, an has something of vigour beyond most of his other performances: his pre cepts are just, and his cautions proper; they are, indeed not new, but in didactic poem novelty is to be expected only in the ornaments and illustra tions. His poetical precepts are accompanied with agreeable and instruc tive notes.

The Masque of *Peleus and Thetis* has here and there a pretty line; but i is not always melodious, and the conclusion is wretched.

In his *British Enchanters* he has bidden defiance to all chronology, by con founding the inconsistent manners of different ages; but the dialogue ha often the air of Dryden's rhyming plays; and the songs are lively, though not very correct. This is, I think, far the best of his works; for if it ha many faults, it has likewise passages which are at least pretty, though the do not rise to any high degree of excellence.

YALDEN.

# YALDEN.

THOMAS YALDEN, the sixth son of Mr. John Yalden of Sussex, was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-school belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of *Josiah Pullen*, a man whose name is still remembered in the university. He became next year one of the scholars of Magdalen College, where he was distinguished by a lucky accident.

It was his turn, one day, to pronounce a declamation; and Dr. Hough, the president, happening to attend, thought the composition too good to be the speaker's. Some time after, the doctor finding him a little irregularly busy in the library, set him an exercise for punishment; and that he might, not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the subject given, and produced with little difficulty a composition which so pleased the president, that he told him his former suspicions, and promised to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addison and Sacheverell, men who were in those times friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued, throughout his life, to think as probably he thought at first, yet did not lose the friendship of Addison.

When Namur was taken by king William, Yalden made an ode. There was never any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of William, who had very little regard for song himself, but happened to employ ministers who pleased themselves with the praise of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in an humorous poem of that time, called *The Oxford Laureat*; in which, after many claims had been made and rejected, Yalden is represented as demanding the laurel, and as being called to his trial, instead of receiving a reward.

His crime was for being a felon in verse,
And presenting his theft to the king;
The first was a trick not uncommon or scarce,
But the last was an impudent thing:

Yet

# TICKELL.

THOMAS TICKELL, the son of the reverend Richard Ti was born in 1686 at Bridekirk in Cumberland; and in April became a member of Queen's College in Oxford; in 1708 he was Master of Arts, and two years afterwards was chosen Fellow; for wl as he did not comply with the statutes by taking orders, he obtained a pensation from the Crown. He held his Fellowship till 1726, and then cated it, by marrying, in that year, at Dublin.

Tickell was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in sets; he entered early into the world, and was long busy in public af in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison, whose notio is said to have gained by his verses in praise of *Rosamond*.

To those verses it would not have been just to deny regard; for they tain some of the most elegant encomiastick strains; and, among the in merable poems of the same kind, it will be hard to find one with wl they need to fear a comparison. It may deserve observation, that w Pope wrote long afterwards in praise of Addison, he has copied, at l has resembled Tickell.

Let joy salute fair Rosamonda's shade,
And wreaths of myrtle crown the lovely maid.
While now perhaps with Dido's ghost she roves,
And hears and tells the story of their loves,
Alike they mourn, alike they bless their fate,
Since Love which made them wretched, made them great;
Nor longer that relentless doom bemoan,
Which gain'd a Virgil and an Addison.

TICKELL

Then future ages with delight shall see
How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's, looks agree;
Or in fair series laurel'd bards be shown,
A Virgil there, and here an Addison.

POPE

B

He produced another piece of the same kind at the appearance of *Cato*, with equal skill but, not equal happiness.

When the ministers of queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell published *The Prospect of Peace*, a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the nation from the pride of conquest to the pleasures of tranquillity. How far Tickell, whom Swift afterwards mentioned as *Whiggissimus*, had then connected himself with any party, I know not; this poem certainly did not flatter the practices, or promote the opinions, of the men by whom he was afterwards befriended.

Mr. Addison, however he hated the men then in power, suffered his friendship to prevail over his public spirit, and gave in the *Spectator* such praises of Tickell's poem, that when, after having long wished to peruse it, I laid hold on it at last, I thought it unequal to the honours which it had received, and found it a piece to be approved rather than admired. But the hope excited by a work of genius, being general and indefinite, is rarely gratified. It was read at that time with so much favour, that six editions were sold.

At the arrival of king George he sung *The Royal progress*; which being inserted in the *Spectator* is well known, and of which it is just to say, that it is neither high nor low.

The poetical incident of most importance in Tickell's life was his publication of the first book of the *Iliad* as translated by himself, an apparent opposition to Pope's *Homer*, of which the first part made its entrance into the world at the same time.

Addison declared that the rival versions were both good; but that Tickell's was the best that ever was made; and with Addison the wits, his Adherents and followers were certain to concur. Pope does not appear to have been much dismayed; "for," says he, "I have the town, that is, the mob on 'my side." But he remarks, "that it is common for the smaller party to 'make up in diligence what they want in numbers; he appeals to the peo-'ple as his proper judges; and if they are not inclined to condemn him, 'he is in little care about the high-flyers at Button's."

Pope did not long think Addison an impartial judge; for he considered him as the writer of Tickell's version. The reasons for his suspicion I will literally transcribe from Mr. Spence's Collection.

"There had been a coldness (said Mr. Pope) between Mr. Addison and me for some time; and we had not been in company together, for a good while, any where but at Button's coffee-house where I used to see him almost every day.—On his meeting me there, one day in particular, he took me aside, and said he should be glad to dine with me, at such a tavern, if I staid till those people were gone (Budgell and Philips). He 'went accordingly; and after dinner Mr. Addison said, 'That he had 'wanted for some time to talk with me; that his friend Tickell had for-

" merly, whilst at Oxford, translated the first book of the *Iliad*; tha
" designed to print it, and had desired him to look it over; that he
" therefore beg that I would not desire him to look over my first book,
" cause, if he did, it would have the air of double dealing.' I as
" him that I did not at all take it ill of Mr. Tickell that he was goi
" publish his translation; that he certainly had as much right to tra
" any author as myself; and that publishing both was entering on a
" stage. I then added, that I would not desire him to look over my
" book of the *Iliad*, because he had looked over Mr. Tickell's; but
" wish to have the benefit of his observations on my second, which
" then finished, and which Mr. Tickell had not touched upon. Ac
" ingly I sent him the second book the next morning: and Mr. Addis
" few days after returned it, with very high commendations.—Soon
" it was generally known that Mr. Tickell was publishing the first bo
" the *Iliad*, I met Dr. Young in the street; and, upon our falling into
" subject, the Doctor expressed a great deal of surprize at Tickell's
" ing had such a translation so long by him. He said, that it was i
" ceiveable to him, and that there must be some mistake in the matter;
" each used to communicate to the other whatever verses they wrote, e
" the least things; that Tickell could not have been busied in so long a
" there without his knowing something of the matter; and that he had
" heard a single word on it till on this occasion. This surprise o
" Young, together with what Steele has said against Tickell in relati
" this affair, make it highly probable that there was some underhand
" ing in that business; and indeed Tickell himself, who is a very fair
" thy man, has since, in a manner, as good as owned it to me. Wh
" was introduced into a conversation between Mr. Tickell and Mr. Po
" a third person, Tickell did not deny it; which, considering his h
" and zeal for his departed friend, was the same as owning it."

Upon these suspicions, with which Dr. Warburton hints that othe cumstances concurred, Pope always in his *Art of Sinking* quotes this as the work of Addison.

To compare the two translations would be tedious; the palm is given universally to Pope; but I think the first lines of Tickell's wer ther to be preferred, and Pope seems to have since borrowed something them in the correction of his own.

When the Hanover succession was disputed, Tickell gave what assi his pen would supply. His *Letter to Avignon* stands high among poems; it expresses contempt without coarseness, and superiority wi insolence. It had the succes which it deserved, being five times print

He was now intimately united to Mr. Addison, who when he wen Ireland as secretary to the lord Sunderland, took him thither, and emp him in public business; and when (1717) afterwards he rose to be sec

of state, made him under-secretary. Their friendship seems to have continued without abatement; for when Addison died, he left him the charge of publishing his works, with a solemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To these works he prefixed an elegy on the author, which could owe none of its beauties to the assistance which might be suspected to have strengthened or embellished his earlier compositions; but neither he nor Addison ever produced nobler lines than are contained in the third and fourth paragraphs; nor is a more sublime or more elegant funeral-poem to be found in the whole compass of English literature.

He was afterwards (about 1725) made secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, a place of great honour; in which he continued till 1740, when he died on the twenty-third of April at Bath.

Of the poems yet unmentioned the longest is *Kensington Gardens*, of which the versification is smooth and elegant; but the fiction unskilfully compounded of Grecian Deities and Gothick Fairies. Neither species of those exploded Beings could have done much; and when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell, however, cannot be refused a high place among the minor poets; nor should it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors to the *Spectator*. With respect to his personal character he is said to have been a man of gay conversation, at least a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domestick relations without censure.

HAMMOND.

# SOMERVILE.

OF Mr. SOMERVILE's life I am not able to say any thing that c satisfy curiosity.

He was a gentleman whose estate was in Warwickshire; his house, whe he was born in 1692, is called Edston, a seat inherited from a long line ancestors; for he was said to be of the first family in his county. He te of himself, that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Wi chester-school, and was elected fellow of New College. It does not appe that in the places of his education, he exhibited any uncommon proofs genius or literature. His powers were first displayed in the country, whe he was distinguished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justi of the Peace.

Of the close of his life, those whom his poems have delighted will re with pain the following account, copied from the Letters of his frie Shenstone, by whom he was too much resembled.

" —Our old friend Somervile is dead! I did not imagine I could ha " been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion.—*Sublatum quærimus.* I c " now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age, and to distress of c " cumstances; the last of these considerations wrings my very soul to thi " on. For a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one pr " duction) generally pleased the world, to be plagued and threatened l " wretches that are low in every sense; to be forced to drink himself in " pains of the body, in order to get rid of the pains of the mind, is a m " sery."—He died July 16, 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henl on Arden.

His distresses need not be much pitied: his estate is said to be fifteen hu dred a year, which by his death has devolved to lord Somervile of Scotlan His mother indeed, who lived till ninety, had a jointure of six hundred.

It is with regret that I find myself not better enabled to exhibit memoria of a writer, who at least must be allowed to have set a good example men of his own class, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledg and who has shewn, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters.

Somervi

Somervile has tried many modes of poetry; and though perhaps he has not any reached such excellence as to raise much envy, it may commonly be d at least that "he writes very well for a gentleman." His serious pieces : sometimes elevated, and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verses Addison, the couplet which mentions *Clio* is written with the most exqui- e delicacy of praise; it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are ldom attained. In his odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines; but the second ode he shews that he knew little of his hero, when he talks his private virtues. His subjects are commonly such as require no great pth of thought or energy of expression. His Fables are generally stale, d therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the tion is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential. In his Tales there too much coarseness, with two little care of language, and not sufficient pidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chace*, which he undertook in his maturer age, hen his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verse, of which wever his two first lines give a bad specimen. To this poem praise can- t be totally denied. He is allowed by sportsmen to write with great in- lligence of his subject, which is the first requisite to excellence; and ough it is impossible to interest the common readers of verse in the dan- rs or pleasures of the chace, he has done all that transition and variety uld easily effect; and has with great propriety enlarged his plan by the odes of hunting used in other countries.

With still less judgement did he chuse blank verse as the vehicle of *Rural orts*. If blank verse be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled prose; and miliar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them but lsurd novelty; which wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot please ng. One excellence of the *Splendid Shilling* is, that it is short. Disguise n gratify no longer than it deceives.

# SAVAGE.

IT has been observed in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness; and that those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summit of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station: whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded, because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent, or more severe.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinsick and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they, who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have atchieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives, and untimely deaths.

To these mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of Richard Savage, a man whose writings entitle him to an eminent rank in the classes of learning, and whose misfortunes claim a degree of compassion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the consequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Countess of Macclesfield, having lived some time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a public confession of adultery

adultery the most obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which she was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and he prosecuted his design in the most effectual manner; for he applied not to the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be dissolved, the nuptial contract annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the usual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of some, who considered marriage as an affair only cognizable by ecclesiastical judges *; and on March 3d was separated from his wife, whose fortune, which was very great, was repaid her, and who having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a short time married to Colonel Brett.

While the earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a son; and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to consider him as his own, left none any reason to doubt of the sincerity of her declaration; for he was his god-father, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inserted in the register of St. Andrew's parish in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, whom as she was now set free from her husband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great tenderness the child that had contributed to so pleasing an event. It is not indeed easy to discover what motives could be found to over-balance that natural affection of a parent, or what interest could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of shame or of poverty, by which some wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be supposed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and solicited reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legislature had undeservedly bestowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminished by the expences which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that she would be wicked without temptation; that she would look upon her son from his birth with a kind of resentment and abhorrence; and, instead of supporting, assisting, and defending him, delight to see him struggling with misery, or that she would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obstructing his resources, and with an implacable and restless cruelty continue her persecution from the first hour of his life to the last.

* This year was made remarkable by the dissolution of a marriage solemnized in the face of the church. SALMON'S REVIEW.

The following protest is registered in the books of the House of Lords.

Dissentient.

Because that we conceive that this is the first bill of that nature that hath passed, where there was not a divorce first obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous consequence in the future.

HALIFAX. ROCHESTER.

But what ever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and injoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her Mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while she lived, always looked upon him with that tenderness which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary: but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of three hundred pounds; yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call in law to the assistance of justice, her will was, eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and passed through several of the classes, with what rapidity or with what applause cannot now be known. As he always spoke with respect of his master, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being distinguished, or his industry from being rewarded; and if in so low a state he obtained distinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and industry.

It is very reasonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, because his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earliest productions had been preserved, like those of happier students, we might in some have found vigorous sallies of that sprightly humour which distinguishes *The Author to be let*, and in others strong touches of that imagination which painted the solemn scenes of *The Wanderer*.

While

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl of Rivers was seized with a distemper, which in a short time put an end to his life*. He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always been amused with fallacious and evasive answers; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could not longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is perhaps the first instance of a lye invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the Earl did not imagine there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her in a short time to another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations†.

By whose kindness this scheme was counteracted, or by whose interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not; it is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in so cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that those who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, could yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want, to expose him without interest, and without provocation; and Savage might on this occasion find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoe-maker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice †.

It is generally reported, that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to con-

* He died 18 Aug. 1712. E.

† Savage's Preface to his Miscellany.

fess;

fess; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own: he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

He was no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings* for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart, nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and having no profession, became by necessity an author.

At this time the attention of the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and, without any other knowledge of the question than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the Bishop†.

What was the success or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing ‡, and in his eighteenth year offered to the stage a comedy borrwed from a Spanish plot, which was

* See the Plain Dealer.

† It was called "The Battle of the Pamphlets." E.

‡ Jacob's Lives of the Dramatick Poets. Dr. J.

refused

used by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, lo, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it on the stage, under the title of * WOMAN'S A RIDDLE, but allowed the happy author no part of the profit.

Not discouraged however at his repulse, he wrote two years afterwards VE IN A VEIL, another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, with little better success than before: though it was received and acted, it appeared so late in the year, that the author obtained no other advan- from it than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks, whom he was pitied, caressed and relieved.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of evolence which constituted his character, promoted his interest with the most zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the op- tunities of recommending him, and asserted, that "the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father †."

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confi- ce, of which he sometimes related an instance too extraordinary to be itted, as it affords a very just idea of his patron's character.

He was once desired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmost import- e, to come very early to his house the next morning. Mr. Savage came he had promised, found the chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to enquire; but mediately seated himself with Sir Richard. The coachman was ordered drive, and they hurried with the utmost expedition to Hyde-Park Corner, ere they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir hard then informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and t he had desired him to come thither that he might write for him. He n sat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was sur- ed at the meanness of the entertainment, and after some hesitation ven- d to ask for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered e brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their phlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that Sir Richard uld call for the reckoning and return home: but his expectations deceiv- him, for Sir Richard told him, that he was without money, and that the phlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for; and Savage was refore obliged to go and offer their new production to sale for two gui- s, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned

* This play was printed first in 8vo; and afterwards in 12mo. the fifth edition. † Dr. J. Plain Dealer.

home,

home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it no relation to his life, ought to be preserved. Sir Richard Steele having day invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, t were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; after dinner, when wine and mirth had set them free from the observatio a rigid ceremony, one of them enquired of Sir Richard, how such an pensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Rich very frankly confessed, that they were fellows of whom he would very lingly be rid. And being then asked, why he did not discharge them, clared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an e cution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had though convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit w they staid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and by paying the discharged their attendance, having obliged Sir Richard to promise that should never again find him graced with a retinue of the same kind.

Under such a tutor, Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or gality: and perhaps many of the misfortunes which the want of those tues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be ju imputed to so unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindness of Sir Richard end in common favours. He posed to have established him in some settled scheme of life, and to contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural da ter, on whom he intended to bestow a thousand pounds. But though he always lavish of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in such a man that he was very seldom able to keep his promises, or execute his own tentions: and, as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offe the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiously inform that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasper that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never a wards admitted him to his house.

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might by his imprudence ex himself to the malice of a tale-bearer; for his patron had many fol which, as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might at times incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the w is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that t are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither s of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue. The fault therefor Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude; but Sir Richard

like

kewise be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear ntempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment e has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune without any other friend than lr Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, serves at least to be remembered for his virtues*, which are not often to found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others. o be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in y case; but those qualities deserve still greater praise when they are found that condition, which makes almost every other man, for whatever rea-n, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of those to whom calamity seldom complained ithout relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, id not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal id steady kindness to the time of his death.

By his interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother † fifty-unds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate f this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were erformed. His mother was infected among others with the general mad-ss of the South Sea traffic; and, having been disappointed in her expec-tions, refused to pay what perhaps nothing but the prospect of sudden af-luence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was nsequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a short time e amusements of the stage took such a possession of his mind, that he ne-r was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the ayers, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased th his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed im a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life re-ularly paid.

* As it is a loss to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I shall insert another instance of Mr. Vilks's generosity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by n impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in order, for which his friends designed him, left his wn country, and came to London in quest of employment, but found his solicitations fruitless, and is necessities every day more pressing. In this distress he wrote a tragedy and offered it to the players, y whom it was rejected. Thus were his last hopes defeated, and he had no other prospect than of the ost deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at least worthy f some reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with so much diligence, at the house afforded him a considerable sum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himself to the udy of physick, and prosecuted his design with so much diligence and success, that when Dr. Boer-ave was desired by the Czarina to recommend proper persons to introduce into Russia the practice and udy of physick, Dr. Smith was one of those whom he selected. He had a considerable pension settled him at his arrival, and was one of the chief physicians at the Russian court. Dr. J.

A letter from Dr. Smith in Russia to Mr. Wilks, is printed in Chetwood's History of the Stage. E.

† This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published 1727. Dr. J.

That this act of generosity may receive its due praise, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be sullied by her general character, it is proper to mention that Mr. Savage often declared in the strongest terms, that he never saw her alone, or in any other place than behind the scenes.

At her death he endeavoured to shew his gratitude in the most decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies*, because he knew that too great profusion of praise would only have revived those faults which his natural equity did not allow him to think less, because they were committed by one who favoured him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not suffer him to prolong the memory or diffuse the censure.

In his *Wanderer* he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her; but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too lavish of his praise. He seems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactress would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depressed his own.

He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorset, that it was just to consider him as and injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life. The same disposition she endeavoured to diffuse among all those over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed succeeded too well in her design; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty, for some of those whom she incited against him were ashamed of their own conduct, and boasted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this censure I do not indiscriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned with gratitude the humanity of one Lady, whose name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom therefore I cannot pay the praises which she deserves for having acted well in opposition to influence, precept, and example.

* Chetwood, however, has printed a poem on her death, which he ascribes to Mr. Savage. See History of the Stage, p. 206. F.

The punishment which our laws inflict upon those parents who murder ir infants is well known, nor has its justice ever been contested; but if ey deserve death who destroy a child in its birth, what pains can be se- re enough for her, who forbears to destroy him only to inflict sharper mi- ies upon him; who prolongs his life only to make him miserable; and o exposes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppressi- , the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices see him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own industry, or charity of others, has enabled him to rise for a short time above his mi- ries, plunges him again into his former distress?

The kindness of his friends not affording him any constant supply, and e prospect of improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance neces- rily leading him to places of expence, he found it necessary to * endeavour ce more at dramatick poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a ore extensive knowledge, and longer observation. But having been un- ccessful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, resolved now to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting ragedy.

The story which he chose for the subject, was that of Sir Thomas Over- ry, a story well adapted to the stage, though perhaps not far enough re- oved from the present age, to admit properly the fictions necessary to com- te the plan: for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always most ended with the violation of these truths of which we are most certain; and of course conceive those facts most certain, which approach nearest to r own time.

Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which wrote it be considered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of strength genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an agination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time in which he was employed upon is performance, he was without lodging and often without meat; nor had any other conveniences for study than the fields or the streets allowed m; there he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into shop, beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down at he had composed, upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus distressed is not perfect, its faults e surely to be imputed to a cause very different from want of genius, and st rather excite pity than provoke censure.

But when under these discouragements the tragedy was finished, there yet mained the labour of introducing it on the stage, an undertaking, which, an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and disgusting:

* In 1723.

for, having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit hi wholly t› the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the em tions of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of hi formance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critick of a very different class, whose friendship he received great assistance on many occasions, and he never mentioned but with the utmost tenderness and regard. He hac for some time distinguished by him with very particular kindness, a this occasion it was natural to apply to him as an author of an establishe racter. He therefore sent this tragedy to him, with a short copy of ve in which he desired his correction. Mr. Hill, whose humanity and ness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but as remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiments in lan Mr. Savage did not think his play much improved by his innovation, ar even at that time the courage to reject several passages which he cou approve; and, what is still more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generosi to resent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the prologue and epil in which he touches on the circumstances of the author with great tende

After all these obstructions and compliances, he was only able to his play upon the stage in the summer, when the chief actors had re and the rest were in possession of the house for their own advantage. A these, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overb by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a provin which nature seemed not to have designed him, for neither his voice, nor gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he blotted out his name from the list, when a copy of his tragedy was shown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more successful, for th of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the which poverty and Cibber had been able to spread over it, procure the notice and esteem of many persons eminent for their rank, their and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated arose to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very sum, having been never master of so much before.

In the dedication ‡, for which he received ten guineas, there is n remarkable. The Preface contains a very liberal encomium on the blo excellence of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not i

* They are printed in the present Collection.

† It was acted only three nights, the first was on June 12, 1723. When the house opened winter season it was once more performed, for the author's benefit, Oct. 2. E.

‡ To Herbert Tryt, Esq. of Herefordshire. Dr J.

ter part of his life see his friends about to read without snatching the play t of their hands. The generosity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occa- n; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's necessities returned, he encouraged ubscription to a Miscellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by blishing his story in the *Plain Dealer* *, with some affecting lines, which asserts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received him from his mother, but of which he was himself the Author, as Mr. vage afterwards declared. These lines, and the paper in which they were serted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by aking her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her aversion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the subscription to the Miscellany, but furished likewise the greatest part of the Poems of which it is composed, and ticularly *The Happy Man*, which he published as a specimen.

The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patroze merit in distress, without any other solicitation, were directed to be left Button's coffee-house; and Mr. Savage going hither a few days afterwards, ithout expectation of any effect from his proposal, found to his surprise venty guineas †, which had been sent him in consequence of the compason excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic representation.

To this Miscellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of is mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety f imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced.

The Dedication is addressed to the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whom e flatters without reserve, and, to confess the truth, with very little art ‡. he same observation may be extended to all his Dedications: his compliments are constrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of or- r, or the decency of introduction: he seems to have written his panegyrics

* The *Plain Dealer* was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Mr. Savage lled the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns each six essays; and the aracter of the work was observed regularly to rise in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's. Dr. J.

† The names of those who so generously contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former ount, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Duchess of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady ielmain, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Duchess Dowager and Duchess of Rutland, Lady Straf- d, the Countess Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord insborough, Lord Milsington, Mr. John Savage. Dr. J.

‡ This the following extract from it will prove:

"Since our country has been honoured with the glory of your wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer remains a doubt whether your sex have strength of mind in proportion to their sweetness. There is something in your verses as distinguished as your air---They are as strong as truth, as deep as reason, as clear as innocence, and as smooth as beauty.---They contain a nameless and peculiar mixture of force and grace, which is at once so movingly serene, and so majestically lovely, that it is too amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in your writings.

"As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to your Ladyship, because there is scarce a possibility that I should say more than I believe, when I am speaking of your Excellence. Dr. J.

for

for the perusal only of his patrons, and to imagine that he had no other task than to pamper them with praises however gross, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the assistance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards, the death of the king furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors: but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increase of his reputation; though it must certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himself to attempt a species of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhausted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and those that had succeeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November, 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies with less interruption, with an intent to discharge another lodging which he had in Westminster; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house, and sat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house; but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as should offer themselves till morning.

In this walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing-cross, and therefore went in. Merchant with some rudeness demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, swords were drawn on both sides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having likewise wounded a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the house; but being intimidated and confused, without resolution either to fly or stay, they were taken in a back-court by one of the company and some soldiers whom he had called to his assistance.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gatehouse, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened in the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with some

ome distinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not mong the common criminals, but in the Press-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crowded in a very unusual anner, and the public appeared to interest itself as in a cause of general oncern. The witnesses against Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman ho kept the house, which was a house of ill fame, and her maid, the men ho were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who id been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been seen in ed. They swore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which avage and Gregory drew their swords to justify; that Savage drew first, id that he stabbed Sinclair when he was not in a posture of defence, or hile Gregory commanded his sword; that after he had given the thrust he rned pale, and would have retired, but the maid clung round him, and ne of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by utting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There was some difference in their deposition; one did not see Savage ive the wound, another saw it given when Sinclair held his point towards he ground; and the woman of the town asserted, that she did not see Sinlair's sword at all: this difference however was very far from amounting to nconsistency; but it was sufficient to shew, that the hurry of the dispute as such, that it was not easy to discover the truth with relation to particular ircumstances, and that therefore some deductions were to be made from he credibility of the testimonies.

Sinclair had declared several times before his death, that he received his ound from Savage: nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeaoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the suddenness of the whole action, nd the impossibility of an ill design, or premeditated malice, and partly justify it by the necessity of self-defence, and the hazard of his own life, he had lost that opportunity of giving the trust: he observed, that neither eason nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, nd which if he should suffer it, he might never be able to return; that it as always allowable to pevent an assault, and to preserve life by taking way that of the adversary, by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to escape, he eclared, that it was not his design to fly from justice or decline a trial, but o avoid the expences and severities of a prison; and that he intended to ave appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence; hose who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applause could ot be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities.

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The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be perso characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strui a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom were supported; and the character of Savage was by several persons of tinction asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to l or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his fortunes and his wit.

Had his audiencebeen his judges, he had undoubtedly been acqui but Mr. Page, who was then upon the beneh, treated him with his insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, e vourate to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with thi quent harangue:

'Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Savage is ' great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the ' that he wears very fine cloaths, much finer cloaths than you or I, g ' men of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, ' more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen ' jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. S ' should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury.'

Mr. Savage, hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the mer were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, lutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began capitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and tl cessity of endeavouring to escape the expences of imprisonment; b judge having ordered him to be silent and repeated his orders withc fect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn th where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each the death of either is only manslaughter; but where one is the aggres in the case before them, and, in pursuance of his first attack kills the the law supposes the action, however sudden, to be malicious. The deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage a Gregory were guilty of murder; and Mr. Merchant, who had no only of manslaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which lasted eight hours. Mr. and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight; fo afterwards they were sent back to the court to receive sentence; on occasion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memo following speech:

"It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any thing by way of defe "vindication; nor can we expect from your Lordships, in this cou "the sentence which the law requires you, as judges, to pronounce

men of our calamitous condition.—But we are also persuaded, that as mere men, and out of this seat of rigorous justice, you are susceptive of the tender passions, and too humane not to commiserate the unhappy situation of those, whom the law sometimes perhaps—exacts—from you to pronounce upon. No doubt you distinguish between offences which arise out of premeditation, and a disposition habituated to vice or immorality, and transgressions which were the unhappy and unforeseen effects of casual absence of reason, and sudden impulse of passion: we therefore hope you will contribute all you can to an extension of that mercy, which the gentlemen of the jury have been pleased to shew Mr. Merchant, who (allowing facts as sworn against us by the evidence) has led us into this our calamity. I hope this will not be as if we meant to reflect upon that gentleman, or remove any thing from us upon him, or that we repine the more at our fate, because he has no participation of it: No, my Lord! For my part, I declare nothing could more soften my grief, than to be without any companion in so great a misfortune *."

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen against him, she made use of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him in publick, and refused him admission into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to salute her. She discovered him before he entered her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain, who had forced himself in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the most submissive tenderness to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire: and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to speak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended no other use of her lye, than to set herself free from his embraces and solicitations, and was very far from suspecting that she would treasure it in her memory, as an instrument of future wickedness, or that he would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that, however

* Mr. Savage's Life.

however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the Queen; whether she that invented had the front to relate it; whether she found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design, I know not: but methods had been taken to persuade the Queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she for a long time refused to hear any one of those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a bawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generosity; and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this Lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March, 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to enquire upon what motives his mother could persecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expence, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage: why she should endeavour to destroy him by a lye—a lye which could not gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct, that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive *, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was so often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting, that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at last shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means necessary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in opposition to that of the Countess of Hertford; no

* She died Oct. 11, 1753, at her house in Old Bond Street, aged above fourscore. E.

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one can fail to observe how much more amiable it is to relieve than to oppress, and to rescue innocence from destruction, than to destroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities *. The peculiar circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account†, which was then published, and of which several thousands were in a few weeks dispersed over the nation: and the compassion of mankind operated so powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled by frequent presents, not only to support himself, but to assist Mr. Gregory in prison; and when he was pardoned and released, he found the number of his friends not lessened.

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itself doubtful; the evidences which appeared against him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the women notoriously infamous; she, whose testimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her assertions. He always himself denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory who is now (1744) Collector of Antigua, is said to declare him far less criminal than he was imagined, even by some who favoured him; and Page himself afterwards confessed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all these particulars are united together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much sullied by his trial.

Some time after he obtained his liberty, he met in the street the woman that had sworn with so much malignity against him. She informed him, that she was in distress, and, with a degree of confidence not easily attained, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting her misery, and finding pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury; and changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself.

This is an action which in some ages would have made a saint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, must be allowed to be an instance of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vici-

* It appears that during his confinement he wrote a letter to his mother, which he sent to Theophilus Cibber, that it might be transmitted to her through the means of Mr. Wilks. In his Letter to Cibber he says—"as to death, I am easy, and dare meet it like a man—all that touches me is the concern of my friends, and a reconcilement with my mother—I cannot express the agony I felt when I wrote the letter to her—if you can find any decent excuse for shewing it to Mrs. Oldfield, do; for I would have my friends (and that admirable lady in particular) be satisfied I have done my duty towards it——Dr. Young to-day sent me a letter, most passionately kind. E.

† Written by Mr. Buckingham and another gentleman. Dr. J.

ous, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the strongest provocations, and exercised the most ardent charity.

Compassion was, indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenceless, or to press upon the falling: whoever was distressed was certain at least of his good wishes; and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to sooth them by sympathy and tenderness.

But when his heart was not softened by the sight of misery, he was sometimes obstinate in his resentment, and did not quickly lose the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to speak with anger of the insolence and partiality of Page, and a short time before his death revenged it by a satire *.

It is natural to enquire in what terms Mr. Savage spoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no necessity of using any art to set his conduct in the fairest light. He was not willing to dwell upon it; and, if he transiently mentioned it, appeared neither to consider himself as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood †. How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he published many years afterwards. On occasion of a copy of verses, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author endeavoured to illustrate his position, that "the best may sometimes deviate from virtue," by an instance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very just representation of a good man, to suppose him liable to drunkenness, and disposed in his riots to cut throats.

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied, and which at other times were suddenly stopped; so that he spent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worse, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied.

Another cause of his profusion was the absurd kindness of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituating him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of these inconveniences determined him to endeavour after some settled income, which, having long found submission and intreaties fruitless, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He

* Printed in the Present collection.

† In one of his letters he styles it "a fatal quarrel, but too well known." Dr. J.

had

had now, as he acknowledged, lost that tenderness for her, which the whole series of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repress, till he found, by the efforts which she made for his destruction, that she was not content with refusing to assist him, and being neutral in his struggles with poverty, but was as ready to snatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes, and that she was now to be considered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could satisfy. He therefore threatened to harrass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct, unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Whether shame still survived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herself, and imagined that some of the darts which satire might point at her would glance upon them; Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of discernment; and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of publick entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practising their duty.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatick poetry, he would perhaps not have had many superiors; for as he never suffered any scene to pass before his eyes without notice, he had treasured in his mind all the different combinations of passions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which distinguish one character from another; and as his conception was strong, his expressions were clear, he easily received impressions from objects, and very forcibly transmitted them to others.

Of his exact observations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest names, in a small pamphlet, called, *The Author to be let**, where he introduces Iscariot Hackney, a prostitute scribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his disposition and morals, habits of

* Printed in his Works, vol. II. p. 231.

life,

life, and maxims of conduct. In the introduction are related many secret histories of the petty writers of that time, but sometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumstances, or those of their relations; nor can it be denied, that some passages are such as Iscariot Hackney might himself have produced.

He was accused likewise of living in an appearance of friendship with some whom he satirised, and of making use of the confidence which he gained by a seeming kindness to discover failings and expose them: it must be confessed, that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he had praised at another.

It may be alledged, that the same man may change his principles; and that he, who was once deservedly commended, may be afterwards satirised with equal justice, or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyrick which he had too hastily bestowed; and that, as a false satire ought to be recanted, for the sake of him whose reputation may be injured, false praise ought likewise to be obviated, lest the distinction between vice and virtue should be lost, lest a bad man should be trusted upon the credit of his encomiast, or lest others should endeavour to obtain the like praises by the same means.

But though these excuses may be often plausible, and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyrick its value, and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

*The Author to be let* was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middlesex, in a * dedication which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would perhaps not have published under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great satisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontrouled freedom of the press, and the assertion that the "liberties taken "by the writers of Journals with their superiors were exorbitant and unjus-

* See his Works, vol. II. p. 233.

"tifiable,"

tifiable," very ill became men, who have themselves not always shewn the exactest regard to the laws of subordination in their writings, and who have often satirised those that at least thought themselves their superiors, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed in the highest offices of the kingdom. But this is only an instance of that partiality which almost every man indulges with regard to himself: the liberty of the press is a blessing when we are inclined to write against others, and a calamity when we find ourselves overborne by the multitude of our assailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by those who suffer by its influence, and too little by those in whose favour it is exerted; and a standing army is generally accounted necessary by those who command, and dangerous and oppressive by those who support it.

Mr. Savage was likewise very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each species of bad poets in the Bathos were, as he was directed to assert, "set down at random;" for when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to such an improbability, he had no other answer to make, than that "he did not think of it;" and his friend had too much tenderness to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After having remarked what is false in this dedication, it is proper that I observe the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring what Savage asserted, that the account of the circumstances which attended the publication of the Dunciad, however strange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raised Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among those that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was considered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was suspected of supplying with private intelligence and secret incidents: so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing, and wrote another, cannot be denied; because he himself confessed, that, when he had lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram * against him.

Mr. Savage however set all the malice of all the pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendship of Mr. Pope cheaply purchased by being ex-

* This epigram was, I believe, never published.

"Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother,
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother;
Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
On one so poor you cannot take the law,
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.
Uncag'd then let the harmless monster rage,
Secure in dullness, madness, want, and age." Dr. J.

posed

posed to their censure and their hatred; nor had he any reason to rep the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a steady and unalienable friend to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed neutrality with reg party, he published a panegyrick on Sir Robert Walpole, for which h rewarded by him with twenty guineas, a sum not very large, if eith excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron be consi but greater than he afterwards obtained from a person of yet higher and more desirous in appearance of being distinguished as a patron terature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of Sir Robert Wa and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and ger with contempt; as he was one of those who were always zealous in assertions of the justice of the late opposition, jealous of the rights people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court; i natural to ask him what could induce him to employ his poetry in pr that man who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an opp of his country? He alledged, that he was then dependent upon the Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the ministry; and that enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his lead had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to t integrity.

On this, and on many occasions, he was ready to lament the mis living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the begin the end of his life; for I know not whether he ever had, for three m together a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of reside

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much of the inconstancy conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to his obstinacy, and submit his own judgment, and even his virtue, t government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his m were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often t fects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period * of his life, while he was surrounded by affluen pleasure, he published *The Wanderer*, a moral poem, of which the is comprised in these lines:

I fly all public care, all venal strife,
To try the still compar'd with active life;
To prove, by these, the sons of men may owe
The fruits of bliss to bursting clouds of woe;
That ev'n calamity, by thought refin'd,
Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind.

* 1729.

And more distinctly in the following passage:

By woe, the soul to daring action swells;
By woe, in plaintless patience it excels;
From patience prudent, clear experience springs,
And traces knowledge through the course of things!
Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, success,
Renown:—whate'er men covet and caress.

This performance was always considered by himself as his master-piece; and Mr. Pope, when he asked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it, that it gave him more pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third.

It has been generally objected to *The Wanderer*, that the disposition of the parts is irregular; that the design is obscure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, succeed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not so much a regular fabrick, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile.

This criticism is universal, and therefore it is reasonable to believe it at least in a great degree just; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be missed by negligence or stupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts distinct.

It was never denied to abound with strong representations of nature, and just observations upon life; and it may easily be observed, that most of his pictures have an evident tendency to illustrate his first great position, "that "good is the consequence of evil." The sun that burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales; the deluge that rushes down the broken rocks with dreadful impetuosity, is separated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mother, which, though remarkably delicate and tender, is a proof how deep an impression it had upon his mind.

This must be at least acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellencies, that this poem can promote no other purposes than those of virtue, and that it is written with a very strong sense of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the history of Mr. Savage's performances, than to display their beauties, or to obviate the criticisms which they have occasioned; and therefore I shall not dwell upon the particular passages which deserve applause: I shall neither shew the excellence of his descriptions, nor expatiate on the terrific portrait of suicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has distinguished the intellectual features of the rebels, who suffer death in his last canto. It is however, proper to observe,

that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the least allusion to any real persons or actions.

From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage: nor can it, without some degree of indignation and concern, be told that he sold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his abscence intrusted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he often altered, revised, recurred to his first reading or punctuation and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irresolute without end, as on a question of the last importance, and at last was seldom satisfied: the intrusion or omission of a comma was sufficient to discompose him, and he would lament an error of a single letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impression of some verses, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a "spell upon him;" and indeed the anxiety with which he dwelt upon the minutest and most trifling niceties deserved no other name than that of fascination.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price, was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported; but to that intemperate desire of pleasure, and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities. He happened at that time to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first bidder, and perhaps for the first price that was proposed, and would probably have been content with less, if less had been offered him.

This poem was addressed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the first lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the highest strains of panegyrick, and the warmest professions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connexion or elegance of style.

These praises in a short time he found himself inclined to retract, being discarded by the man on whom he had bestowed them, and whom he then immediately discovered not to have deserved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage assigned very different reasons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alledged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: if, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his

his part, the affair ended, without any ill consequences; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine should be paid for by him that drank it, his method of composition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, assume the government of the house, and order the butler in an imperious manner to set the best wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought against him: Having given him a collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time exposed to sale upon the stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations: for, having been obliged, from his first entrance into the world, to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without scruple, and trust for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very seldom drew upon him those inconveniences that might be feared by any other person; for his conversation was so entertaining, and his address so pleasing, that few thought the pleasure which they received from him dearly purchased, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel* quarrelled with him, because he would not subtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promised to allow him, and that his resentment was only a plea for the violation of his promise: He asserted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that subsistence which he thought not so much a favour, as a debt, since it was offered him upon conditions which he had never broken; and that his only fault was, that he could not be supported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns, and that he appeared desirous that he would pass those hours with him, which he so freely bestowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage considered as a censure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear, and which,

* His expression in one of his letters was, "that Lord Tyrconnel had involved his estate, and therefore poorly sought an occasion to quarrel with him." Dr. J.

in the latter and cooler parts of his life, was so offensive to him that he declared it as his resolution, "to spurn that friend who should presume to dictate to him;" and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmness.

He was likewise inclined to resent such expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions; and declared, that the request was still more unreasonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was insupportably disagreeable.' This assertion affords another instance of that inconsistency of his writings with his conversation, which was so often to be observed. He forgot how lavishly he had, in his Dedication to *The Wanderer*, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generosity, the candour and politeness of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without understanding, without good-nature and without justice; of whose name he thought himself obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of *The Wanderer* which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *The Triumph of Health and Mirth*, on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with sorrow for the sickness of her favourite, takes a flight in quest of her sister Health, whom she finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidst the fragrance of perpetual spring, with the breezes of the morning sporting about her. Being solicited by her sister Mirth, she readily promises her assistance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues, by which the sickness of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumstances of his birth and life, the splendour of his appearance, and the distinction which was for some time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, intitled him to familiarity with persons of higher rank than those to whose conversation he had been before admitted; he did not fail to gratify that curiosity, which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated; whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them; and whether great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestic behaviour, with that accuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon

mmon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisiiness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute edom from all pressing or domestick engagements.

His discernment was quick, and therefore he soon found in every per-a, and in every affair, something that deserved attention; he was supted by others, without any care for himself, and was therefore at leire to pursue his observations.

More circumstances to constitute a critick on human life could not easily ncur; nor indeed could any man, who assumed from accidental advanes more praise than he could justly claim for his real merit, admit any quaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom likewise it st be confessed, that abilities really exalted above the common level, or nue refined from passion, or proof against corruption, could not easily nd an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the result of Mr. Savage's enquiry, though he was not much ustomed to conceal his discoveries, it may not be entirely safe to relate, cause the persons whose characters he criticised are powerful; and power d resentment are seldom strangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly just, cause what he asserted in conversation might, though true in general, be ightened by some momentary ardour of imagination, and, it can be delired only from memory, may be imperfectly represented; so that the picne at first aggravated, and then unskilfully copied, may be justly suspectd to retain no great resemblance of the original.

It may however be observed, that he did not appear to have formed very levated ideas of those to whom the administration of affairs, or the conduct f parties, has been intrusted; who have been considered as the advocates f the crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the ost implicit confidence, and the loudest applauses. Of one particular erson, who has been at one time so popular as to be generally esteemed, nd at another so formidable as to be universally detested, he observed, that is acquisitions had been small, or that his capacity was narrower, and that ie whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politicks, and from poiticks to obscenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his speculations on great characters as now at an end. He was banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, nd turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickr any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which e was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune, like iis. And though it is not to be imagined but that the separation must for me time have been preceded by coldness, peevishness, or neglect, though was undoubtedly the consequence of accumulated provocations on both des; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it as sudden as a stroke of thunder; that, though he might have transiently speeted it, he had never suffered any thought so unpleasing to sink into his mind,

But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes; and his lor had, without danger, the pleasure of boasting how he would have t him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his visit at his own house; was prevailed on, by his domesticks, to retire without insisting upo ing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accused by Mr. Savage of some actions, w scarcely any provocations will be thought sufficiently to justify; suc seizing what he had in his lodgings, and other instances of wanton cru by which he increased the distress of Savage, without any advanta himself.

These mutual accusations were retorted on both sides, for many y with the utmost degree of virulence and rage; and time seemed rath augment than to diminish their resentment. That the anger of Mr. Sa should be kept alive, is not strange, because he felt every day the c quences of the quarrel; but it might reasonably have been hoped, Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot thos vocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, ha in reality much hurt him.

The spirit of Mr. Savage indeed never suffered him to solicit a rec liation; he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult; hi periority of wit supplied the disadvantages of his fortune, and en him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be some gratification of his vanity, it affo very little relief to his necessities; and he was very frequently reduc uncommon hardships, of which, however, he never made any mea importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear misery with fort than enjoy prosperity with moderation.

He now thought himself again at liberty to expose the cruelty of his ther; and therefore, I believe about this time published *The Bastar* poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the begin where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advanta base birth; and the pathetick sentiments at the end, where he rec the real calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and spirit of the verses, the peculiar circumstances o author, the novelty of the subject, and the notoriety of the story to w the allusions are made, procured this performance a very favourabl ception; great numbers were immediately dispersed, and editions multiplied with unusual rapidity.

One circumstance attended the publication, which Savage used to with great satisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with " reverence" inscribed, happened then to be at Bath, where she not conveniently retire from censure, or conceal herself from observ and no sooner did the reputation of the poem begin to spread, tha heard it repeated in all places of concourse, nor could she enter the a

bly-

ly-rooms or cross the walk, without being saluted with some lines from *he Bastard.*

This was perhaps the first time that ever she discovered a sense of shame, nd on this occasion the power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who ad, without scruple, proclaimed herself an adultress, and who had first ndeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang im, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled om reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the most haste, to shelter herself among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the satisfaction of finding, that, though he could not eform his mother, he could punish her, and that he did not always suffer lone.

The pleasure which he received from this increase of his poetical reputaion, was sufficient for some time to overbalance the miseries of want, hich this performance did not much alleviate; for it was sold for a very rivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon, that ive impressions were sold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The sale of this poem was always mentioned by Mr. Savage with the utmost elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an incontestible proof of a general acknowledgment of his abilities. It was indeed the only production of which he could boast a general reception.

But though he did not lose the opportunity which success gave him, of setting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the suffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not suffer his esteem of himself to depend upon others, nor found any thing sacred in the voice of the people when they were inclined to censure him; he then readily shewed the folly of expecting that the publick should judge right, observed how slowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himself with the applause of men of judgment, and was somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgment who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the slowness of their sale to other causes; either they were published at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the town was engrossed by some struggle in the parliament, or some other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publisher not diligently dispersed, or by his avarice not advertised with sufficient frequency. Address, or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person than the author.

By arts like these, arts which every man practises in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be ascribed, Savage

was always able to live at peace with himself. Had he indeed only made use of these expedients to alleviate the loss or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages which it is not in man's power to bestow upon himself they might have been justly mentioned as instances of a philosophical mind, and very properly proposed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imagination with the same dexterity, languish under afflictions which might be easily removed.

It were doubtless to be wished, that truth and reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value; and that men would secure themselves from being disappointed in their endeavours after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself, he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion, and shewn him, what he never wished to see, his real state.

He is even accused, after having lulled his imagination with those ideal opiates, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was upon every occasion too easily reconciled to himself; and that he appeared very little to regret those practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man, as the friend of goodness.

This at least must be allowed him, that he always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity of virtue; and that he never contributed deliberately to spread corruption amongst mankind. His actions which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and therefore he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world: nor can his personal example do any hurt, since, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him,

and

and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. He may be considered as a child exposed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when resolution was not yet strengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit; a circumstance which, in his *Bastard*, he laments in a very affecting manner:

——No Mothers's care
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
No Father's guardian-hand my youth maintain'd,
Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

*The Bastard*, however it might provoke or mortify his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compassion, so that he was still under the same want of the necessaries of life; and he therefore exerted all the interest which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Eusden, the place of Poet Laureat, and prosecuted his application with so much diligence, that the King publickly declared it his intention to bestow it upon him: but such was the fate of Savage, that even the king, when he intended his advantage, was disappointed in his schemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the disposal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's design, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureat an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore bestowed the laurel upon Colley Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus disappointed, took a resolution of applying to the queen, that, having once given him life, she would enable him to support it, and therefore published a short poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the odd title of "Volunteer Laureat." The event of this essay he has himself related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in "The Gentleman's Magazine," from whence I have copied it intire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage succeeded.

"Mr. URBAN,

"In your Magazine for February you published the last 'Volunteer 'Laureat,' written on a very melancholy occasion, the death of the royal 'patroness of arts and literature in general, and of the author of that 'poem in particular; I now send you the first that Mr. Savage wrote under 'that title. This gentleman, notwithstanding a very considerable interest, 'being, on the death of Mr. Eusden, disappointed of the Laureat's place, 'wrote the following verses; which were no sooner published but the 'late Queen sent to a bookselle for them. The author had not at that 'time a friend either to get him introduced, or his poem presented at Court; 'yet such was the unspeakable goodness of that Princess, that, notwith-'standing this act of ceremony was wanting, in a few days after publica-

" tion Mr. Savage received a Bank bill of fifty pounds, and a gracious mes-
" sage from her Majesty, by the Lord North and Guilford, to this effect;
" —' That her Majesty was highly pleased with the verses; that she took
" particularly kind his lines there relating to the king; that he had permis-
" sion to write annually on the same subject; and that he should yearly re-
" ceive the like present, till something better (which was her Majesty's in-
" tention) could be done for him.' After this, he was permitted to present
" one of his annual poems to her Majesty, had the honour of kissing her
" hand, and met with the most gracious reception.

" Yours, &c."

Such was the performance*, and such its reception; a reception, which, though by no means unkind, was yet not in the highest degree generous; to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyric shewed in the Queen too much desire of hearing her own praises, and a greater regard to herself than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generosity, by which flattery was rather purchased than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the same allowance with much more heroic intention: she had no other view than to enable him to prosecute his studies, and to set himself above the want of assistance, and was contented with doing good without stipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage, however, was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was ravished with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with those which he was promised: he considered himself now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would establish him in some profitable employment.

He therefore assumed the title of "Volunteer Laureat," not without some reprehensions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of "Laureat," was a mark of honour conferred by the King, from whom all honour is derived, and which therefore no man has a right to bestow upon himself; and added, that he might with equal propriety style himself a Volunteer Lord, or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was just; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity, and therefore continued to write under the same title, and received every year the same reward.

He did not appear to consider these encomiums as tests of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promise, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was entitled to his pension, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for some of the last years he regularly inserted

* This poem, being inserted in the future part of this collection, is here omitted. E.

them

hem in "The Gentleman's Magazine," by which they were dispersed ver the kingdom.

Of some of them he had himself so low an opinion, that he intended to mit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed proposals, nd solicited subscriptions; nor can it seem strange, that, being confined o the same subject, he should be at some times indolent, and at others unuccessful; that he should sometimes delay a disagreeable task, till it was oo late to perform it well; or that he should sometimes repeat the same entiment on the same occasion, or at others misled by an attempt after ovelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which supplied him with some ariety; for his business was to praise the Queen for the favours which he ad received, and to complain to her of the delay of those which she had romised: in some of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and a some discontent; in some he represents himself as happy in her patrotage; and in others, as disconsolate to find himself neglected.

Her promise, like other promises made to this unfortunate man, was ever performed, though he took sufficient care that it should not be forgotten. The publication of his "Volunteer Laureat" procured him no ther reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not so depressed by his disappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his interest. When the Princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem * upon her departure, only, as he declared, because it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his wn prospect by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or regard that was paid to it; and therefore it is likely that it was considered at court as n act of duty, to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was therefore not necessary to reward by any new favour: or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it superfluus to lavish presents upon a man whom she intended to establish for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being frustrated, ut his pension likewise of being obstructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of "The Daily Courant," a paper then published under the diection of the ministry, charged him with a crime, which, though very reat in itself, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might ery justly have incensed the Queen against him. He was accused by name f influencing elections against the court, by appearing at the head of a ory mob; nor did the accuser fail to aggravate his crimes, by representing as the effect of the most atrocious ingratitude and a kind of rebellion, gainst the Queen, who had first preserved him from an infamous death, nd afterwards, distinguished him by her favour, and supported him by her

* Printed in this Collection.

charity

charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewise by good fortune very particular. The place of the transaction was mentioned, and the whole series of the rioter's conduct related. This exactness made Mr. Savage's vindication easy; for he never had in his life seen the place which was declared to be the scene of his wickedness, nor ever had been present in any town when its representatives were chosen. This answer he therefore made haste to publish, with all the circumstances necessary to make it credible; and very reasonably demanded, that the accusation should be retracted in the same paper, that he might no longer suffer the imputation of sedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewise pressed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who either trusting to the protection of those whose defence he had undertaken, or having entertained some personal malice against Mr. Savage, or fearing, lest, by retracting so confident an assertion, he should impair the credit of his paper, refused to give him that satisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill effects from the accusation, having sufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge; and therefore willingly dropped it.

He saw soon afterwards a process commenced in the same court against himself, on an information in which he was accused of writing and publishing an obscene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's desire to be distinguished; and, when any controversy became popular, he never wanted some reason for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had chosen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no sooner taken his side, and informed himself of the chief topicks of the dispute, than he took all opportunities of asserting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own interest, or any other visible design than that of drawing upon himself the attention of mankind.

The dispute between the bishop of London and the chancellor is well known to have been for some time the chief topick of political conversation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in pursuance of his character, endeavoured to become conspicuous among the controvertists with which every coffee-house was filled on that occasion. He was an indefatigable opposer of all the claims of ecclesiastical power, though he did not know on what they were founded; and was therefore no friend to the Bishop of London. But he had another reason for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle for he was the friend of Mr. Foster and Mr. Thomson, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his interest in the question, which, however, as he imagined, concerned him so nearly, that it was not sufficient to harangue and dispute, but necessary likewise to write upon it. He

therefore engaged with great ardour in a new poem, called by him, e Progress of a Divine;" in which he conducts a profligate priest by : gradations of wickedness from a poor curacy in the country, to the st preferments of the church, and describes with that humour, which tural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the di- es of human life, his behaviour in every station; and insinuates, his priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the Bishop of n.

en he was asked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could e the bishop with such an action? he had no more to say, than that d only inverted the accusation, and that he thought it reasonable to e, that he, who obstructed the rise of a good man without reason, would d reasons promote the exaltation of a villain.

e clergy were universally provoked by this satire; and Savage, who, s his constant practice, had set his name to his performance, was cen- in "The Weekly Miscellancy*" with severity, which he did not inclined to forget.

But

* short satire was likewise published in the paper, in which were the following lines:

"For cruel murder doomed to hempen death,
Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath.
Well might you think he spent his future years
In prayer, and fasting, and repentant tears
—But, O vain hope!—the truly Savage cries,
"Priests and their lavish doctrines I despise.
"Shall I———
"Who, by free-thinking to free action fir'd,
"In midnight brawls a deathless name acquir'd,
"Now stoop to learn of ecclesiastic men?—
"—No, armed with rhyme, at priests I'll take my aim,
"Though prudence bids me murder but their fame."

"Weekly Miscellany."

swer was published in "The Gentleman's Magazine," written by an unknown hand, from which lowing lines are selected:

"Transform'd by thoughtless rage, and midnight wine,
From malice free, and push'd without design;
In equal brawl if Savage lung'd a thrust,
And brought the youth a victim to the dust;
So strong the hand of accident appears,
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.
Instead of wasting "all thy future years,
"Savage, in prayer, and vain repentant tears;"
Exert thy pent to mend a vicious age,
To curb the priest, and sink his high-church rage;
To shew what frauds the holy vestments hide,
The nests of avarice, lust, and pedant pride:

Then

But a return of invective was not thought a sufficient punishment. The Court of King's Bench was therefore moved against him, and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of insanity. It was urged, in his defence, that obscenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obscene ideas with the view of exposing them to detestation, and of amending the age, by shewing the deformity of wickedness. This plea was admitted; and Sir Philip Yorke, who then presided in that court, dismissed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings. The prosecution, however, answered in some measure the purpose of those by whom it was set on foot; for Mr. Savage was so far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was sold, he did not venture to reprint it; so that it was in a short time forgotten, or forgotten by all but those whom it offended.

It is said, that some endeavours were used to incense the Queen against him; but he found advocates to obviate at least part of their effect; for though he was never advanced, he still continued to receive his pension.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to secure his memory from reproach, by informing those whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any reason to complain of the clergy, he used to threaten them with a new edition of "The Progress of a Divine," it was his calm and settled resolution to suppress it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injustice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called "The Progress of a Free-thinker, whom he intended to lead through all the stages of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedness, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modish sophistry used for that purpose, and at last to dismiss him by his own hand into the other world.

Then change the scene, let merit brightly shine,
And round the patriot twist the wreath divine;
The heavenly guide deliver down to fame;
In well-tune'd lays transmit a Foster's name;
Touch every passion with harmonious art,
Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.
Thus future times shall royal grace extol:
Thus polish'd lines thy present fame enrol.
——— But grant ———
———Maliciously that Savage plung'd the steel,
And made the youth its shining vengeance feel:
My soul abhors the act, the man detests,
But more the bigotry of priestly breasts.

"Gentleman's Magazine, May 1735." Dr. J.

That he did not execute this design, is a real loss to mankind, for he was too well acquainted with all the scenes of debauchery to have failed in his representations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have represented them in such a manner as to expose them either to ridicule or detestation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aside, till the vigour of his imagination was spent, and the effervescence of invention had subsided; but soon gave way to some other design, which pleased by its novelty for a while, and then was neglected like the former.

He was still in his usual exigences, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact œconomist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accustomed to dismiss any of his appetites without the gratification which they solicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleasure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his pension was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintance, and lay for some time out of the reach of all the enquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him; at length he appeared again penny-less as before, but never informed even those whom he seemed to regard most, where he had been; nor was his retreat ever discovered.

This was his constant practice during the whole time that he received the pension from the Queen: he regularly disappeared and returned. He, indeed, affirmed that he retired to study, and that the money supported him in solitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the short time in which it was spent sufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeness and his wit still raised him friends, who were desirous of setting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppressed; and therefore solicited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with so much earnestness, that they obtained a promise of the next place that should become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promise was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was not the promise of a minister to a petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himself set at ease for ever, and, as he observes in a poem written on that incident of his life, trusted and was trusted; but soon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promise was not inviolable. He spent a long time in solicitations, and at last despaired and desisted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the minister some reason to believe that he should not strengthen his own interest by advancing him, for he had taken care to distinguish himself in coffee-houses as an advocate for the ministry of the last years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to justify the conduct, and exalt the character of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an Epistle upon Authors, which he wrote about

that time; but was too wise to publish, and of which only some fragments have appeared inserted by him in the "Magazine" after his retirement.

To despair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed, he had recourse to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of some writers whom Mr. Savage did not think superior to himself, and therefore he resolved to address a poem to him.

For this purpose he made choice of a subject which could regard only persons of the highest rank and greatest affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince; and having retired for some time to Richmond, that he might prosecute his design in full tranquillity, without the temptations of pleasure, or the solicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being disconcerted, he produced a poem, "On Public Spirit, with regard to "Public Works."

The plan of this poem is very extensive, and comprises a multitude of topicks, each of which might furnish matter sufficient for a long performance, and of which some have already employed more eminent writers; but as he was perhaps not fully acquainted with the whole extent of his own design, and was writing to obtain a supply of wants too pressing to admit of long or accurate enquiries, he passes negligently over many public works, which, even in his own opinion, deserved to be more elaborately treated.

But though he may sometimes disappoint his readers by transient touches upon these subjects, which have often been considered, and therefore naturally raise expectations, he must be allowed amply to compensate his omissions, by expatiating, in the conclusion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more susceptible of embellishments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the passions; than many of those which have hitherto been thought most worthy of the ornaments of verse. The settlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the establishment of those in security, whose misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleasing or safe, the acquisition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waste and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of those gifts which heaven has scattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be considered without giving rise to a great number of pleasing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful prospects; and, therefore, whatever speculations they may produce in those who have confined themselves to political studies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applause, of a poet. The politician, when he considers men driven into other countries for shelter, and obliged to retire to forests and deserts, and pass their lives and fix their posterity in the remotest corners of the world, to avoid those hardships which they suffer or fear in their native place, may very properly enquire, why the legislature does not provide a remedy for these miseries, rather

ther than encourage an escape from them. He may conclude, that the flight of every honest man is a loss to the community; that those who are unhappy without guilt ought to be relieved; and the life, which is overburthened by accidental calamities, set at ease by the care of the publick; and that those, who have by misfortune forfeited their claim to favour, ought rather to be made useful to the society which they have injured, than be driven from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleasing undertaking than that of proposing laws which, however just or expedient, will never be made, or endeavouring to reduce to rational schemes of government, societies which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private passions of those who preside in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive from want and persecution, to plenty, quiet, and security, and seats him in scenes of peaceful solitude, and undisturbed repose.

Savage has not forgotten, amidst the pleasing sentiments which this prospect of retirement suggested to him, to censure those crimes which have been generally committed by the discoverers of new regions, and to expose the enormous wickedness of making war upon barbarous nations because they cannot resist, and of invading countries because they are fruitful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of visiting distant lands only to lay them waste. He has asserted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to suppress that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the consequence of power.

His description of the various miseries which force men to seek for refuge in distant countries, affords another instance of his proficiency in the important and extensive study of human life; and the tenderness with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence.

It is observable, that the close of this poem discovers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and published in his Miscellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted views and narrow prospects of the middle state of life, and declares his resolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the shrub; but in this poem, though addressed to a prince, he mentions this state of life as comprising those who ought most to attract reward, those who merit most the confidence of power and the familiarity of greatness; and, accidentally mentioning this passage to one of his friends, declared, that in his opinion all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that state.

In describing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that absurd custom which prevails among the English, of permitting servants to receive money from strangers for the entertainment that they receive, and therefore inserted in his poem these lines:

> But what the flowering pride of gardens rare,
> However royal, or however fair,

If gates, which to access should still give way,
Ope but, like Peter's paradise, for pay?
If perquisited varlets frequent stand,
And each new walk must a new tax demand?
What foreign eye but with contempt surveys?
What Muse shall from oblivion snatch their praise?

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the Queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be shewn for money, and that she so openly countenanced the practice, that she had bestowed the privilege of shewing them as a place of profit on a man, whose merit she valued herself upon rewarding, though she gave him only the liberty of disgracing his country.

He therefore thought with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of these lines might be officiously represented as an insult upon the Queen, to whom he owed his life and subsistence, and that the propriety of his observation would be no security against the censures which the unseasonableness of it might draw upon him; he therefore suppressed the passage in the first edition, but after the Queen's death thought the same caution no longer necessary, and restored it to the proper place.

The poem was therefore published without any political faults, and inscribed to the Prince; but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to present it to him, had no other method of attracting his observation than the publication of frequent advertisements, and therefore received no reward from his patron, however generous on other occasions.

This disappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being by some means or other confident that the prince was not ignorant of his address to him; and insinuated, that, if any advances in popularity could have been made by distinguishing him, he had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have presented his poem in person, and sent to the printer for a copy with that design; but either his opinion changed, or his resolution deserted him, and he continued to resent neglect without attempting to force himself into regard.

Nor was the public much more favourable than his patron, for only seventy-two were sold, though the performance was much commended by some whose judgment in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage easily reconciled himself to mankind without imputing any defect to his work, by observing that his poem was unluckily published two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and by consequence at a time when all those who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in taking leave of others upon their dismission from public affairs.

It

It must be however allowed, in justification of the publick, that this performance is not the most excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that though it cannot be denied to contain many striking sentiments, majestic lines, and just observations, it is in general not sufficiently polished in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digested in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was such as very few could have supported with equal patience; but to which, it must likewise be confessed, that few would have been exposed who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a salary which, though by no means equal to the demands of vanity and luxury, is yet found sufficient to support families above want, and was undoubtedly more than the necessities of life require.

But no sooner had he received his pension, than he withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned in a short time to his former distress, and for some part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him, when the politeness and variety of his conversation would have been thought a sufficient recompence for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expences of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

In this manner were passed those days and those nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of *The Wanderer*, the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose eloquence might have influenced senates; and whose delicacy might have polished courts.

It cannot but be imagined that such necessities might sometimes force him upon disreputable practices; and it is probable that these lines in "The "Wanderer" were occasioned by his reflections on his own conduct.

Though misery leads to happiness, and truth,
Unequal to the load, this languid youth,
(O, let none censure, if, untried by grief,
If, amidst woe, untempted by relief,)
He stooped reluctant to low arts of shame,
Which then, ev'n then he scorn'd, and blush'd to name.

Whoever

Whoever was acquainted with him, was certain to be solicited for small sums, which the frequency of the request made in time considerable, and he was therefore quickly shunned by those who were become familiar enough to be trusted with his necessities; but his rambling manner of life, and constant appearance at houses of public resort, always procured him a new succession of friends, whose kindness had not been exhausted by repeated requests; so that he was seldom absolutely without resources, but had in its utmost exigences this comfort, that he always imagined himself sure of speedy relief.

It was observed, that he always asked favours of this kind without the least submission or apparent consciousness of dependence, and that he did not seem to look upon a compliance with his request as an obligation that deserved any extraordinary acknowledgments; but a refusal was resented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did he readily reconcile himself to those who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

He was sometimes so far compassionated by those who knew his merit and distresses, that they received him into their families, but they soon discovered him to be a very incommodious inmate; for, being always accustomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himself to any stated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his conversation till midnight, without considering that business might require his friends application in the morning; and when he had persuaded himself to retire to bed, was not without equal difficulty, called up to dinner; it was therefore impossible to pay him any distinction without the entire subversion of all œconomy, a kind of establishment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthrow.

It must therefore be acknowledged, in justification of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldness of his friends that Savage was distressed, but because it was in reality very difficult to preserve him long in a state of ease. To supply him with money was a hopeless attempt; for no sooner did he see himself master of a sum sufficient to set him free from care for a day, than he became profuse and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a scheme of pleasure, he never retired till want of money obliged him to some new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing was any longer to be regarded there but amusements and jollity; wherever Savage entered, he immediately expected that order and business should fly before him, that all should thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dull principle of domestick management should be opposed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit to assert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repress that insolence which the superiority of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputation which rose upon any other basis than

that

that of merit: he never admitted any gross familiarities, or submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal. Once, when he was without lodging, meat or clothes, one of his friends, a man indeed not remarkable for moderation in his prosperity, left a message, that he desired to see him about nine in the morning. Savage knew that his intention was to assist him, but was very much disgusted that he should presume to prescribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe refused to visit him, and rejected his kindness.

The same invincible temper, whether firmness or obstinacy, appeared in his conduct to the Lord Tyrconnel, from whom he very frequently demanded that the allowance which was once paid him should be restored; but with whom he never appeared to entertain for a moment the thought of soliciting a reconciliation, and whom he treated at once with all the haughtiness of superiority, and all the bitterness of resentment. He wrote to him, not in a style of supplication or respect, but of reproach, menace and contempt; and appeared determined, if he ever regained his allowance, to hold it only by the right of conquest.

As many more can discover that a man is richer than he is wiser than themselves, superiority of understanding is not so readily acknowledged as that of fortune; nor is that haughtiness, which the consciousness of great abilities incites, born with the same submission as the tyranny of affluence; and therefore Savage, by asserting his claim to deference and regard, and by treating those with contempt whom better fortune animated to rebel against him, did not fail to raise a great number of enemies in the different classes of mankind. Those who thought themselves raised above him by the advantages of riches, hated him because they found no protection from the petulance of his wit. Those who were esteemed for their writings feared him as a critic, and maligned him as a rival, and almost all the smaller wits were his professed enemies.

Among these Mr. Miller so far indulged his resentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct him to be personated on the stage, in a dress like that which he then wore; a mean insult, which only insinuated that Savage had but one coat, and which was therefore despised by him rather than resented; for though he wrote a lampoon against Miller, he never printed it: and as no other person ought to prosecute that revenge from which the person who was injured desisted, I shall not preserve what Mr. Savage suppressed; of which the publication would indeed have been a punishment too severe for so impotent an assault.

The great hardships of poverty were to Savage not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him. He complained that as his affairs grew desperate, he found his reputation for capacity visibly decline; that his opinion in questions of criticism was no longer regarded, when his coat was out of fashion; and that those who, in the interval of his prosperity, were always encouraging him to great undertakings

dertakings by encomiums on his genius and assurances of success, now received any mention of his designs with coldness, thought that the subjects on which he proposed to write were very difficult, and were ready to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncertain, that an author ought to employ much time in the consideration of his plan, and not presume to sit down to write in confidence of a few cursory ideas, and a superficial knowledge; difficulties were started on all sides, and he was no longer qualified for any performance but "The Volunteer Laureat."

Yet even this kind of contempt never depressed him; for he always preserved a steady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach, which he should at any time earnestly endeavour to attain. He formed schemes of the same kind with regard to knowledge and of fortune, and flattered himself with advances to be made in science, as with riches, to be enjoyed in some distant period of his life. For the acquisition of knowledge he was indeed far better qualified than for that of riches; for he was naturally inquisitive, and desirous of the conversation of those from whom any information was to be obtained, but by no means solicitous to improve those opportunities that were sometimes offered of raising his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once he was in possession of them, rarely forsook him; a quality which could never be communicated to his money.

While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the Queen would some time recollect her promise, he had recourse to the usual practice of writers, and published proposals for printing his works by subscription, to which he was encouraged by the success of many who had not a better right to the favour of the publick; but, whatever was the reason, he did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he observed, with some discontent, that, though he offered his works at half a guinea, he was able to procure but a small number in comparison with those who subscribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he saw his proposals neglected by the Queen, who patronised Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition among those who attended the court, who should most promote his interest, and who should first offer a subscription. This was a distinction to which Mr. Savage made no scruple of asserting, that his birth, his misfortunes, and his genius gave a fairer title, than could be pleaded by him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were however not universally unsuccessful; for some of the nobility countenanced his design, encouraged his proposals, and subscribed with great liberality. He related of the Duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receiving his proposals, he sent him ten guineas.

But the money which his subscriptions afforded him was not less volatile than that which he received from his other schemes; whenever a subscription was paid him, he went to a tavern; and, as money so collected is necessarily

cessarily received in small sums, he never was able to send his poems to the press, but for many years continued his solicitations, and squandered whatever he obtained.

This project of printing his works was frequently revived; and as his proposals grew obsolete, new ones were printed with fresher dates. To form schemes for the publication, was one of his favourite amusements; nor was he ever more at ease than when, with any friend who readily fell in with his schemes, he was adjusting the print, forming the advertisements, and regulating the dispersion of his new edition, which he really intended some time to publish, and which, as long as experience had shewn him the impossibility of printing the volume together, he at last determined to divide into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the first might supply the expences of the next.

Thus he spent his time in mean expedients and tormenting suspense, living for the greatest part in fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and consequently skulking in obscure parts of the town, of which he was no stranger to the remotest corners. But wherever he came, his address secured him friends whom his necessities soon alienated; so that he had perhaps a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being scarcely any person eminent on any account to whom he was not known, or whose character he was not in some degree able to delineate.

To the acquisition of this extensive acquaintance every circumstance of his life contributed. He excelled in the arts of conversation, and therefore willingly practised them. He had seldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and therefore was driven into public houses for the common conveniences of life and supports of nature. He was always ready to comply with every invitation, having no employment to withhold him, and often no money to provide for himself; and by dining with one company, he never failed of obtaining an introduction into another.

Thus dissipated was his life, and thus casual his subsistence; yet did not the distraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depress his gaiety. When he had wandered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he sometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his mind in study, to amuse it with pleasing imaginations; and seldom appeared to be melancholy, but when some sudden misfortune had just fallen upon him, and even then in a few moments he would disentangle himself from his perplexity, adopt the subject of conversation, and apply his mind wholly to the objects that others presented to it.

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet imbittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all the prospects of preferment with which he so long entertained his imagination; and, as Sir Robert Walpole had before given him reason to believe

that he never intended the performance of his promise, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was, however, at that time supported by a friend; and as it was not his custom to look out for distant calamities, or feel any other pain than that which forced itself upon his senses, he was not much afflicted at his loss, and perhaps comforted himself that his pension would be now continued without the annual tribute of a panegyrick.

Another expectation contributed likewise to support him: he had taken a resolution to write a second tragedy upon the story of Sir Thomas Overbury, in which he preserved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new incidents, and introduced new characters; so that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another subject; but, in vindication of himself, he asserted, that it was not easy to find a better; and that he thought it his interest to extinguish the memory of the first tragedy, which he could only do by writing one less defective upon the same story; by which he should entirely defeat the artifice of the booksellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always industrious to swell his works, by uniting his worst productions with his best.

In the execution of this scheme, however, he proceeded but slowly, and probably only employed himself upon it when he could find no other amusement; but he pleased himself with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire, would be equivalent to all that he had lost by the death of his patroness.

He did not, in confidence of his approaching riches, neglect the measures proper to secure the continuance of his pension, though some of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death, but on her birth-day next year, he gave a proof of the solidity of his judgment, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been so long beaten, that it was impossible to travel in it without treading in the footsteps of those who had gone before him; and that therefore it was necessary that he might distinguish himself from the herd of encomiasts, to find out some new walk of funeral panegyrick.

This difficult task he performed in such a manner, that this poem may be justly ranked among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birth-day, he has formed a happy combination of topicks, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has united in such a manner, that the relation between them appears natural; and it may be justly said, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears scarcely possible for any man to miss.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is so masterly, that it is sufficient to set this poem above censure; and therefore it is not necessary

cessary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deservedly be admired in any other performance.

To these proofs of his genius may be added, from the same poem, an instance of his prudence, an excellence for which he was not so often distinguished; he does not forget to remind the King, in the most delicate and artful manner, of continuing his pension.

With regard to the success of this address, he was for some time in suspense, but was in no great degree solicitous about it, and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with great tranquillity, till the friend who had for a considerable time supported him, removing his family to another place, took occasion to dismiss him. It then became necessary to enquire more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reason to suspect that no great favour was intended him, because he had not received his pension at the usual time.

It is said, that he did not take those methods of retrieving his interest, which were most likely to succeed; and some of those who were employed in the Exchequer cautioned him against too much violence in his proceedings: but Mr. Savage, who seldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his passion, and demanded of Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reason of the distinction that was made between him and the other pensioners of the Queen, with a degree of roughness which perhaps determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the crime of which he was accused or suspected, and whatever influence was employed against him, he received soon after an account that took from him all hopes of regaining his pension; and he had now no prospect of subsistence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the time required to finish it.

So peculiar were the misfortunes of this man, deprived of an estate and title by a particular law, exposed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themselves into esteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever prospects arose were always intercepted as he began to approach them. The king's intentions in his favour were frustrated; his dedication to the prince, whose generosity on every other occasion was eminent, procured him no reward; Sir Robert Walpole, who valued himself upon keeping his promise to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the Queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore, not only with decency, but with cheerfulness; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his last disappointments, though he was in a short time reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another instance of the insurmountable obstinacy of his spirit; his cloaths

with regard to Lord Tyrconnel, for which he could not but heartily ask his pardon; and as he imagined Lord Tyrconnel's passion might be yet so high, that he would not "receive a letter from him," begged that Sir William would endeavour to soften him; and expressed his hopes that he would comply with his request, and that "so small a relation would not harden "his heart against him."

That any man should presume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and therefore he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained sentiments entirely opposite to his own, and, as he asserted, to the truth, and therefore, instead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of masculine resentment and warm expostulations. He very justly observed, that the style was too supplicatory, and the representation too abject, and that he ought at least to have made him complain with "the dignity of a "gentleman in distress." He declared that he would not write the paragraph in which he was to ask Lord Tyrconnel's pardon; for, "he despised "his pardon, and therefore could not heartily, and would not hypocriti-"cally, ask it." He remarked that his friend made a very unreasonable distinction between himself and him; for, says he, "when you mention men "of high rank in your own character," they are "those little creatures "whom we are pleased to call the great;" but when you address them "in "mine," no servility is sufficiently humble. He then with great propriety explained the ill consequences which might be expected from such a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full answer to all that he should alledge against them; for he always intended to publish a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Savage's reasons and agreed that it ought to be suppressed.

After many alterations and delays, a subscription was at length raised, which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman*; such was the generosity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without solicitation, could not now be effected by application and interest; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a pension less than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid him without exacting any servilities.

Mr. Savage however was satisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though scanty, would be more than sufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid œconomist, and to live according to the exact rules of frugality; for nothing was in his opinion more contemptible than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded

* Mr. Pope. E.

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t; and yet he confessed, that instances of such folly were too common, nd lamented that some men were not to be trusted with their own money.

Full of these salutary resolutions, he left London in July 1739, having aken leave with great tenderness of his friends, and parted from the auhor of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furnished with fifteen uineas, and informed, that they would be sufficient, not only for the exence of his journey, but for his support in Wales for some time; and that here remained but little more of the first collection. He promised a strict dherence to his maxims of parsimony, and went away in the stage-coach; ior did his friends expect to hear from him, till he informed them of his rrival at Swansea.

But when they least expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure, in which he sent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money; and that he therefore could not proceed without a remittance. They then sent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Bristol, from whence he was to go to Swansea by water.

At Bristol he found an embargo laid upon the shipping, so that he could not immediately obtain a passage; and being therefore obliged to stay there some time, he with his usual felicity ingratiated himself with many of the principal inhabitants, was invited to their houses, distinguished at their publick feasts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and therefore easily engaged his affection.

He began very early after his retirement to complain of the conduct of his friends in London, and irritated many of them so much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who proposed the subscription.

After some stay at Bristol he retired to Swansea, the place originally proposed for his residence, where he lived about a year, very much dissatisfied with the diminution of his salary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with those who were most distinguished in that country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powel and Mrs. Jones; by some verses which he inserted in "The Gentleman's Magazine*."

Here he completed his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London; and was desirous of coming to town, to bring it upon the stage. This design was very warmly opposed; and he was advised, by his chief benefactor, to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the stage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual pension should be paid him.

This proposal he rejected with the utmost contempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of those, to whom he was required to

* Reprinted in the present collection.

submit,

submit, was superior to his own. He was now determined, as he expressed it, to be "no longer kept in leading strings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, who proposed to pension him out of the profits of his own "labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a subscription for his works, and had once hopes of success, but in a short time afterwards formed a resolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reasonable to be confined for the gratification of those, who, having promised him a liberal income, had no sooner banished him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance to a salary scarcely equal to the necessities of life.

His resentment of this treatment, which in his own opinion at least, he had not deserved, was such, that he broke off all correspondence, with most of his contributors, and appeared to consider them as persecutors and oppressors; and in the later part of his life declared, that their conduct towards him, since his departure from London, "had been perfidiousness "improving upon perfidiousness, and inhumanity on inhumanity."

It is not to be supposed, that the necessities of Mr. Savage did not sometimes incite him to satirical exaggerations of the behaviour of those by whom he thought himself reduced to them. But it must be granted, that the diminution of his allowance was a great hardship, and that those who withdrew their subscriptions from a man, who upon the faith of their promise, had gone into a kind of banishment, and abandoned all those by whom he had been before relieved in his distresses, will find it no easy task to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alleged and perhaps justly, that he was petulant and contemptuous; that he more frequently reproached his subscribers for not giving him more, than thank them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that his conduct, and this is the worst charge that can be drawn up against him, did them no real injury; and that it therefore ought rather to have been pitied than resented; at least, the resentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deserve that starves the man whom he has persuaded to put himself into his power.

It might have been reasonably demanded by Savage, that they should, before they had taken away what they promised, have replaced him in his former state, that they should have taken no advantages from the situation to which the appearance of their kindness had reduced him, and that he should have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might justly represent, that he ought to have been considered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be released before the dogs should be loosed upon him.

He endeavoured, indeed, to release himself, and, with an intent to return to London, went to Bristol, where a repetition of the kindness which he had formerly found invited him to stay. He was not only caressed and treated, but had a collection made for him of about thirty pounds, with which

which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not suffer him to consider, that such proofs of kindness were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was in a great degree the effect of novelty, and might probably, be every day less, and therefore he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till at length generosity was exhausted and officiousness wearied.

Another part of his misconduct was the practice of prolonging his visits to unseasonable hours, and disconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an error, in a place of commerce, which all the charms of his conversation could not compensate; for what trader would purchase such airy satisfaction by the loss of solid gain, which must be the consequence of midnight merriment, as those hours which were gained at night were generally lost in the morning.

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curiosity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreasing, perhaps without suspecting for what reason their conduct was altered; for he still continued to harrass, with his nocturnal intrusions, those that yet countenanced him, and admitted him to their houses.

But he did not spend all the time of his residence at Bristol in visits or at taverns, for he sometimes returned to his studies, and began several considerable designs. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obscure part of the suburbs, till he found himself again desirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of absence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his design of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the stage; but having neglected to depart with the money that was raised for him, he could not afterwards procure a sum sufficient to defray the expences of his journey; nor perhaps would a fresh supply have had any other effect than, by putting immediate pleasures into his power to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus spending the day in contriving a scheme for the morrow, distress stole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied some of those who were at first enamoured of his conversation; but he might, perhaps, still have devolved to others, whom he might have entertained with equal success, had not the decay of his cloathes made it no longer consistent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to associate with him in publick places. He now began to find every man from home at whose house he called; and was therefore no longer able to procure the necessaries of life, but wandered about the town, slighted and neglected, in quest of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his misery, he was pursued by the officers for small debts which he had contracted; and was therefore obliged to withdraw from the small number of friends from whom he had still reason to hope for favours.

His custom was to lie in bed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and after having paid his visit return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obscure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat, till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial.

In this distress, he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who sheltered him in his house, though at the usual inconveniences with which his company was attended; for he could neither be persuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to rise in the day.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery, he was always disengaged and chearful: he at sometimes pursued his studies, and at others continued or enlarged his epistolary correspondence; nor was he ever so far dejected as to endeavour to procure an encrease of his allowance by any other methods than accusations and reproaches.

He had now no longer any hopes of assistance from his friends at Bristol, who as merchants, and by consequence sufficiently studious of profit, cannot be supposed to have looked with much compassion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think any excellence equivalent to a fault of such consequence as neglect of œconomy. It is natural to imagine, that many of those, who would have relieved his real wants, were discouraged from the exertion of their benevolence by observation of the use which was made of their favours, and conviction that relief would only be momentary, and that the same necessity would quickly return.

At last he quitted the house of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, still intending to set out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January 1742-3, having been at supper with two of his friends, he was at his return to his lodgings arrested for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-house, and conducted to the house of a sheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune, in a letter to one of the gentlemen with whom he had supped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

"It was not a little unfortunate for me, that I spent yesterday's evening "with you; because the hour hindered me from entering on my new lodg- "ing; however, I have now got one, but such an one as I believe nobody "would chuse.

"I was arrested, at the suit of Mrs. Read, just as I was going up stairs "to bed, at Mr. Bowyer's; but taken in so private a manner, that I believe "nobody

" nobody at the White Lion is apprised of it. Though I let the officer " know the strength (or rather weakness) of my pocket, yet they treated " me with the utmost civility; and even when they conducted me to con- " finement, it was in such a manner, that I verily believe I could have " escaped, which I would rather be ruined than have done, notwith- " standing the whole amount of my finances was but three pence half- " penny.

" In the first place I must insist, that you will industriously conceal this " from Mrs. S——s, because I would not have her good-nature suffer " that pain, which, I know, she would be apt to feel on this occasion.

" Next, I conjure you, dear Sir, by all the ties of friendship, by no " means to have one uneasy thought on my account: but to have the same " pleasantry of countenance, and unruffled serenity of mind, which (God " be praised!) I have in this, and have had in a much severer calamity. " Furthermore I charge you, if you value my friendship as truly as I do " yours, not to utter, or even harbour, the least resentment against Mrs. " Read. I believe she has ruined me, but I freely forgive her; and (though " I will never more have any intimacy with her) I would, at a due distance " rather do her an act of good, than ill will. Lastly (pardon the expres- " sion) I absolutely command you not to offer me any pecuniary assistance " nor to attempt getting me any from any one of your friends. At another " time, or on any other occasion, you may, dear friend, be well assured, I " would rather write to you in the submissive style of a request, than that " of a peremptory command.

" However, that my truly valuable friend may not think I am too proud " to ask a favour, let me entreat you to let me have your boy to attend me " for this day, not only for the sake of saving me the expence of porters, " but for the delivery of some letters to people whose names I would not " have known to strangers.

" The civil treatment I have thus far met from those whose prisoner I " am, makes me thankful to the Almighty, that though he has thought fit to " visit me (on my birth-night) with affliction, yet (such is his great good- " ness!) my affliction is not without aleviating circumstances. I murmur " not; but am all resignation to the divine will. As to the world, I hope " that I shall be endued by Heaven with that presence of mind, that serene " dignity in misfortune, that constitutes the character of a true nobleman; " a dignity far beyond that of coronets; a nobility arising from the just " principles of philosophy, refined and exalted by those of Christianity."

He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes that he should be able to procure bail, and avoid the necessity of going to prison. The state in which he passed his time, and the treatment which he received, are very justly expressed by him in a letter which he wrote to a friend: " The

"whole day," says he, "has been employed in various people's filling my "head with their foolish chimerical systems, which has obliged me cooly "(as far as nature will admit) to digest, and accomodate myself to every "different person's way of thinking; hurried from one wild system to ano-"ther, till it has quite made a chaos of my imagination, and nothing done "—promised—disappointed—ordered to send, every hour, from one part "of the town to the other."

When his friends, who had hitherto caressed and applauded, found that to give bail and pay the debt was the same, they all refused to preserve him from a prison at the expence of eight pounds; and therefore, after having been for some time at the officers house, "at an immense expence," as he observes in his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate,

This expence he was enabled to support by the generosity of Mr. Nash at Bath, who, upon receiving from him an account of his condition, immediately sent him five guineas, and promised to promote his subscription at Bath, with all his interest.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at least a freedom from suspense and rest from the disturbing vicissitudes of hope and disappointment; he now found that his friends were only companions, who were willing to share his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and therefore he no longer expected any assistance from them.

It must however be observed of one gentleman, that he offered to release him by paying the debt; but that Mr. Savage would not consent to, I suppose because he thought that he had before been too burthensome to him.

He was offered by some of his friends, that a collection should be made for his enlargement; but he "treated the proposal," and declared* "he should "again treat it, with disdain. As to writing any medicant letters, he had "too high a spirit, and determined only to write to some ministers of state, "to try to regain his pension."

He continued to complain† of those that had sent him into the country, and objected to them, that he had "lost the profits of his play, which had been finished three years;" and in another letter declares his resolution to publish a pamphlet, that the world might know how "he had been used."

This pamphlet was never written; for he in a very short time recovered his usual tranquillity, and cheerfully applied to more inoffensive studies. He indeed steadily declared, that he was promised a yearly allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the sum; but he seemed to re-

* In a letter after his confinement. Dr. J.

† Letter, Jan. 15.

sign

sign himself to that as well as to other misfortunes, and lose the remembrance of it in his amusements and employments.

The cheerfulness with which he bore his confinement appears from the following letter, which he wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends in London:

"I now write to you from my confinement in Newgate, where I have "been ever since Monday last was se'nnight, and where I enjoy myself with "much more tranquillity than I have known for upwards of a twelvemonth "past; having a room entirely to myself, and pursuing the amusement of "my poetical studies, uninterrupted and agreeable to my mind. I thank "the Almighty, I am now all collected in myself; and, though my person "is in confinement, my mind can expatiate on ample and useful subjects "with all the freedom imaginable. I am now more conversant with the "Nine than ever, and if, instead of a Newgate-bird, I may be allowed to "be a bird of the Muses, I assure you, Sir, I sing very freely in my cage: "sometimes indeed in the plaintive notes of the nightingale; but at others "in the cheerful strains of the lark."

In another letter he observes, that he ranges from one subject to another, without confining himself to any particular task; and that he was employed one week upon one attempt, and the next upon another.

Surely the fortitude of this man deserves, at least, to be mentioned with applause; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, constituted a wise man, are those of bearing and forbearing, which it cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally possessed by Savage; and indeed the want of one obliged him very frequently to practise the other.

He was treated by Mr. Dagge, the keeper of the prison, with great humanity; was supported by him at his own table, without any certainty of recompence; had a room to himself, to which he could at any time retire from all disturbance; was allowed to stand at the door of the prison, and sometimes taken out into the fields;* so that he suffered fewer hardships in prison than he had been accustomed to undergo in the greatest part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his office, but made some overtures to the creditor for his release, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his imprisonment, to treat him with the utmost tenderness and civility.

Virtue is undoubtedly most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult; and therefore the humanity of a gaoler certainly deserves this public attestation; and the man, whose heart has not been hardened by such an employment, may be justly proposed as a pattern of benevolence.

* See this confirmed, Gent. Mag. vol. LVII. 1140. N.

If

If an inscription was once engraved "to the honest toll-gatherer," less honours ought not to be paid "to the tender gaoler."

Mr. Savage very frequently received visits, and sometimes presents from his acquaintances; but they did not amount to a subsistence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generosity of this keeper; but these favours, however they might endear to him the particular persons from whom he received them, were very far from impressing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Bristol, and therefore he thought he could not more properly employ himself in prison, than in writing a poem called "London and Bristol delineated*."

When he had brought this poem to its present state, which, without considering the chasm, is not perfect, he wrote to London an account of his design, and informed his friend†, that he was determined to print it with his name; but enjoined him not to communicate his intention to his Bristol acquaintance. The gentleman, surprised at his resolution, endeavoured to dissuade him from publishing it, at least from prefixing his name; and declared, that he could not reconcile the injunction of secrecy with his resolution to own it at its first appearance. To this Mr. Savage returned an answer agreeable to his character, in the following terms:

"I received yours this morning; and not without a little surprise at the "contents. To answer a question with a question, you ask me concerning "London and Bristol, Why will I add *delineated*? Why did Mr. Woolaston "add the same word to his RELIGION OF NATURE? I suppose that it "was his will and pleasure to add it in his case; and it is mine to do so in "my own. You are pleased to tell me, that you understand not why se"crecy is enjoined, and yet I intend to set my name to it. My answer is "—I have my private reasons, which I am not obliged to explain to any "one. You doubt my friend Mr. S——‡ would not approve of it—And "what is it to me whether he does or not! Do you imagine that Mr. S—— "is to dictate to me? if any man who calls himself my friend should assume "such an air, I would spurn at his friendship with contempt. You say, I "seem to think so by not letting him know it—And suppose I do, what "then? Perhaps I can give reasons for that disapprobation, very foreign "from what you would imagine. You go on in saying, Suppose I should "not put my name to it—My answer is, that I will not suppose any such "thing, being determined to the contrary: neither, Sir, would I have you "suppose, that I applied to you for want of another press; nor would I have "you imagine, that I owe Mr. S—— obligations which I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and such his obstinate adherence to his own resolutions, however absurd. A prisoner! supported by charity! and, what-

* The author preferred this title to that of "London and Bristol compared;" which, when he began the piece, he intended to prefix to it. Dr. J.

† This friend was Mr. Cave the printer. N.

‡ *Mr. Strong*, of the Post-office. N.

ever

ever insults he might have received during the latter part of his stay at Bristol, once caressed, esteemed, and presented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a sudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerness of his resentment, and publish a satire, by which he might reasonably expect that he should alienate those who then supported him, and provoke those whom he could neither resist nor escape.

This resolution, from the execution of which it is probable that only his death could have hindered him, is sufficient to shew, how much he disregarded all considerations that opposed his present passions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had opposition any other effect than to heighten his ardour, and irritate his vehemence.

This performance was however laid aside, while he was employed in soliciting assistance from several great persons; and one interruption succeeding another, hindered him from supplying the chasm, and perhaps from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finished in his own opinion; for it is very unequal, and some of the lines are rather inserted to rhyme to others, than to support or improve the sense; but the first and last parts are worked up with great spirit and elegance.

His time was spent in the prison for the most part in study, or in receiving visits; but sometimes he descended to lower amusements, and diverted himself in the kitchen with the conversation of the criminals; for it was not pleasing to him to be much without company; and though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the first that offered; for this he was sometimes reproved by his friends, who found him surrounded with felons: but the reproof was on that, as on other occasions, thrown away; he continued to gratify himself, and to set very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other scene of his life, he made use of such opportunities as occurred of benefiting those who were more miserable than himself, and was always ready to perform any office of humanity to his fellow-prisoners.

He had now ceased from corresponding with any of his subscribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promised him, and by whom it was expected that he would have been in a very short time enlarged, because he had directed the keeper to enquire after the state of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court*, that the creditor might be obliged to make him some allowance, if he was continued a prisoner, and, when on that occasion he appeared in the hall, was treated with very unusual respect.

* See Gent. Mag. vol. LVII. p. 1049.

But

But the resentment of the city was afterwards raised by some accounts that had been spread of the satire; and he was informed that some of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a prisoner at their own expence. This he treated as an empty menace; and perhaps might have hastened the publication, only to shew how much he was superior to their insults, had not all his schemes been suddenly destroyed.

When he had been six months in prison, he received from one of his friends*, in whose kindness he had the greatest confidence, and on whose assistance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in such terms as sudden resentment dictated. Henley, in one of his advertisements, had mentioned "Pope's treatment "of Savage." This was supposed by Pope to be the consequence of a complaint made by Savage to Henley, and was therefore mentioned by him with much resentment. Mr. Savage returned a very solemn protestation of his innocence, but however appeared much disturbed at the accusation. Some days afterwards he was seized with a pain in his back and side, which, as it was not violent, was not suspected to be dangerous; but growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himself to his room, and a fever seized his spirits. The symptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any assistance. The last time that the keeper saw him was on July the 31st, 1743; when Savage, seeing him at his bed-side, said, with an uncommon earnestness, "I have something to say to you, Sir;" but, after a pause, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, "'Tis gone!" The keeper soon after left him; and the next morning he died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expence of the keeper.

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally distinguished by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weaknesses and abilities.

He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect: of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgment was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious, that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others in a short time, better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances,

* Mr. Pope. See some extracts of letters from that gentleman to and concerning Mr. Savage, *in* Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 502. E.

which

which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the art of escaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture; and amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety, lost no new idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. He had therefore made in coffee-houses the same proficiency as others in their closets: and it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obscures as embelishes them.

His judgment was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment; and it is not without some satisfaction, that I can produce the suffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain such odious ideas as some, who perhaps had neither his judgment nor experience, have published, either in ostentation of their sagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

This method of life particularly qualified him for conversation, of which he knew how to practice all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modest and easy, open and respectful; his language was vivacious or elegant, and equally happy upon grave and humourous subjects. He was generally censured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgment, but of his fortune: when he left his company, he was frequently to spend the remaining part of the night in the street, or at least was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which it is not strange that he delayed as long as he could; and sometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himself.

It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passions reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day.

With regard to his œconomy, nothing can be added to the relation of his life. He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself; he therefore never prosecuted any scheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to secure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily digusted; but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very small offences were sufficient to provoke him), he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony till his passion had subsided.

His friendship was therefore of little value; for though he was zealous in the support or vindication of those whom he loved, yet it was always dangerous to trust him, because he considered himself as discharged by the first quarrel from all ties of honour or gratitude; and would betray those secrets which in the warmth of confidence had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him an universal accusation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to set himself free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himself in a state of dependance, his pride being equally powerful with his other passions, and appearing in the form of insolence at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity the most innocent species of pride, was most frequently predominant: he could not easily leave off, when he at once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page to discover in the faces of his audience how they were affected with any favourite passage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to separate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praise to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been suggested or amended; and was so accurate, as to relate that he owed *three words* in "The Wanderer" to the advice of his friends.

His veracity was questioned, but with little reason; his accounts, though not indeed always the same, were generally consistent. When he loved any man, he suppressed all his faults; and when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: but his characters were generally true, so far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied, that his partiality might have sometimes the effect of falsehood.

In cases indifferent, he was zealous for virtue, truth, and justice: he knew very well the necessity of goodness to the present and future happiness of mankind; nor is there perhaps any writer, who has less endeavoured to please by flattering the appetites or perverting the judgment.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceases to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had resolved to suppress be excepted, he has very little to fear from the strictest moral or religious censure. And though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critic, it must however be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with

success, because what was nature in Savage, would in another be affectation. It must be confessed, that his descriptions are striking, his images animated, his fictions justly imagined, and his allegories artfully pursued; that his diction is elevated, though sometimes forced, and his numbers sonorous and majestic, though frequently sluggish and encumbered. Of his style, the general fault is harshness, and its general ecxellence is dignity; of his sentiments, the prevailing beauty is simplicity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none who candidly consider his fortune, will think an apology either necessary or difficult. If he was not always sufficiently instructed in his subject, his knowledge was at least greater than could have been attained by others in the same state. If his works were sometimes unfinished, accuracy cannot reasonably be exacted from a man oppressed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a speedy publication. The insolence and resentment of which he is accused were not easily to be avoided by a great mind irritated by perpetual hardships, and constrained hourly to return the spurns of contempt, and repress the insolence of prosperity; and vanity surely may be readily pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praises, and the consciousness of deserving them.

Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty; nor will any wise man easily presume to say, "Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived or written "better than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or those, who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

# SWIFT.

AN Account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteness, by Dr. Hawkesworth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship. I cannot therefore be expected to say much of a life, concerning which I had long since communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narrations with so much elegance of language and force of sentiment.

JONATHAN SWIFT was, according to an account said to be* written by himself, the son of Jonathan Swift, an attorney and was born at Dublin on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leicester, the son of a clergyman, who was minister of a parish in Herefordshire†. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Irishman by the Irish; but would occasionally call himself an Englishman. The question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it.

Whatever was his birth, his education was Irish. He was sent at the age of six to the school at Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the University of Dublin.

In his academical studies he was either not diligent or not happy. It must disappoint every reader's expectation, that, when at the usual time he claimed the Bachelorship of Arts, he was found by the examiners too conspicuously deficient for regular admission, and obtained his degree at last by *special favour*, a term used in that university to denote want of merit.

* Mr. Sheridan in his life of Swift observes, that this account was really written by the Dean, and now exists in his own hand-writing in the Library of Dublin College. E.

† Spence's Anecdotes, vol. II. p. 273.

Of

Of this disgrace it may be easily supposed that he was much ashamed, and shame had its proper effect in producing reformation. He resolved from that time to study eight hours a-day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. This part of his story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to men, whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.

In this course of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the observation of an old companion may be trusted he drew the first sketch of his "Tale of a Tub."

When he was about one-and-twenty (1688), being by the death of Godwin Swift his uncle, who had supported him, left without subsistence, he went to consult his mother, who then lived at Leicester, about the future course of his life; and by her direction solicited the advice and patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whose father Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendship with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.

Temple received with sufficient kindness the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they conversed together, so much pleased, that he detained him two years in his house. Here he became known to King William, who sometimes visited Temple when he was disabled by the gout, and, being attended by Swift in the garden, shewed him how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expressed his kindness to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horse.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him; and when he was consulted by the Earl of Portland about the expedience of complying with a bill then depending for making parliaments triennial, against which King William was strongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to shew the Earl that the proposal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he sent Swift for the same purpose to the King. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of displaying them, made totally ineffectual by the predetermination of the King; and used to mention this disappointment as his first antidote against vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a disorder, as he thought, by eating too much fruit. The original of diseases is commonly obscure. Almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The disease of Swift was giddiness with deafness, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, pursued him through life, and at last sent him to the grave, deprived of reason.

Being

Being much oppressed at Moor-park by this grievous malady, he was advised to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but finding no benefit, returned to Sir William, at whose house he continued his studies, and is known to have read among other books, "Cyprian" and Irenæus." He thought exercise of great necessity, and used to run half a mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is easy to imagine that the mode in which his first degree was conferred left him no great fondness for the University of Dublin, and therefore he resolved to become a Master of Arts at Oxford. In the testimonial which he produced, the words of disgrace were omitted; and he took his Master's degree (July the 5, 1692) with such reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he used to pay his mother at Leicester a yearly visit. He travelled on foot, unless some violence of weather drove him into a waggon, and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchased clean sheets for six-pence. This practice Lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of grossness and vulgarity: some may ascribe it to his desire of surveying human life through all its varieties; and others, perhaps with equal probability, to a passion which seems to have been deep fixed in his heart, the love of a shilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor-park deserved some other recompence than the pleasure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's conversation; and grew so impatient, that (1694) he went away in discontent.

Temple, conscious of having given reason for complaint, is said to have made him Deputy Master of the Rolls in Ireland; which, according to his kinsman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to discharge. Swift therefore resolved to enter into the Church, in which he had at first no higher hopes than of the chaplainship to the Factory at Lisbon; but being recommended to Lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of *Kilroot* in *Connor*, of about an hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift so necessary, that he invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment, in exchange for the prebend which he desired him to resign. With this request Swift complied, having perhaps equally repented their separation, and they lived on together with mutual satisfaction; and, in the four years that passed between his return and Temple's death it is probable that he wrote the "Tale of a Tub" and the "Battle of the Books."

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet, and wrote Pindarick Odes to Temple, to the King, and to the Athenian society a knot of obscure men*, who published a periodical pamphlet of answers to

* The Publisher of this Collection was John Dunton, E.

questions

questions sent, or supposed to be sent, by Letters. I have been told that Dryden, having perused these verses, said, "Cousin Swift, you will ne-"ver be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuscripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained, from King William a promise of the first prebend that should be vacant at Westminster or Canterbury.

That this promise might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the King the posthumous works with which he was intrusted; but neither the dedication, nor tenderness for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondness, revived in King William the remembrance of his promise. Swift awhile attended the Court; but soon found his solicitations hopeless.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkeley to accompany him into Ireland, as his private secretary; but after having done the business till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one Bush had persuaded the Earl that a Clergyman was not a proper secretary, and had obtained the office for himself. In a man like Swift, such circumvention and inconstancy must have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to suffer. Lord Berkeley had the disposal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the secretary's influence supposed to have been secured by a bribe, it was bestowed on somebody else; and Swift was dismissed with the livings of Laracor and Rathbeggin in the diocese of Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increased the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profession with great decency and exactness.

Soon after his settlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whose name was Johnson, the daughter of the steward of Sir William Temple, who, in consideration of her father's virtues, left her a thousand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whose whole fortune was twenty-seven pounds a year for her life.. With these ladies he passed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened his bosom; but they never resided in the same house, nor did he see either without a witness. They lived at the Parsonage, when Swift was away; and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a neighbouring clergyman.

Swift was not one of those minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his first work, except his few poetical Essays, was the "Dis-"sentions in Athens and Rome," published in (1701) in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a visit to some bishop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he seemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work,

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he was told by the Bishop, that he was "a young man;" and, still persisting to doubt, that he was "a very positive young man."

Three years afterward (1704) was published "The Tale of a Tub:" of this book charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention; but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be universally believed, was never owned by himself, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when Archbishop Sharp and the Duchess of Somerset by shewing it to the Queen, debarred him from a bishoprick.

When this wild work first raised the attention of the public, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him, seeming to think him the author; but Smalridge answered with indignation, "Not all that you and I have "in the world, nor all that ever we shall have, should hire me to write "the Tale of a Tub."

The digressions relating to Wotton and Bentley must be confessed to discover want of knowledge, or want of integrity; he did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them. But Wit can stand its ground against Truth only a little while. The honours due to Learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.

"The Battle of the Books" is so like the "Combat des Livres" which the same question concerning the Ancients and Moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of such a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous protestation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily disowned*.

For some time after Swift was probably employed in solitary study, gaining the qualifications requisite for future eminence. How often he visited England, and with what diligence he attended his parishes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards that he became a professed author; and then one year (1708) produced "The sentiments of a Church-"of-England Man; the ridicule of Astrology, under the name of "Bic-"kerstaff;" the "Argument against abolishing Christianity;" and the defence of the "Sacramental Test."

"The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man" is written with great coolness, moderation, ease, and perspicuity. The "Argument against "abolishing Christianity" is a very happy and judicious irony. One passage in it deserves to be selected.

"If Christianity were once abolished, how could the free-thinkers, the "strong reasoners and the men of profound learning, be able to find ano-"ther subject so calculated, in all points, whereon to display their abilities?

* See Sheridan's Life, p. 451, where are some remarks on this passage. K.

What

What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those, whose genius, by continual practice, hath been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine, or distinguish themselves, upon any other subject? We are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would take away the greatest, perhaps the only, topick we have left. Who would ever have suspected Asgill for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand to provide them with materials? What other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? It is the wise choice of the subject that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For had an hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion."

The reasonableness of a *Test* is not hard to be proved; but perhaps it ist be allowed that the proper test has not been chosen.

The attention paid to the papers published under the name of "Bickertaff," induced Steele, when he projected the "Tatler," to assume an ɔellation which had already gained possession of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a "Project for the advancement of Religion," addressed to Lady Berkeley; by whose kindness it is not unely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is med with great purity of intention, and displayed with sprightliness and gance, it can only be objected, that, like many projects, it is, if not nerally impracticable, yet evidently hopeless, as it supposes more zeal, ıcord, and perseverance, than a view of mankind gives reason for excting.

He wrote likewise this year a "Vindication of Bickerstaff;" and an exnation of an "Ancient Prophecy," part written after the facts, and the t never completed, but well planned to excite amazement.

Soon after began the busy and important part of Swift's life. He was ıployed (1710) by the primate of Ireland to solicit the Queen for a ression of the First Fruits and Twentieth parts to the Irish Clergy. With s purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley to whom he was mentioned as a ın neglected and oppressed by the last ministry, because he had refused co-operate with some of their schemes. What he had refused has never ɔn told; what he had suffered was, I suppose, the exclusion from a biɔprick by the remonstrances of Sharp, whom he describes as "the harmless tool of others hate," and whom he represents as afterwards suing for pardon."

Harley's designs and situation were such as made him glad of an auxili- so well qualified for his service; he therefore soon admitted him to niliarity, whether ever to confidence some have made a doubt; but it

would have been difficult to excite his zeal without persuading him that he was trusted, and not easy to delude him by false persuasions.

He was certainly admitted to those meetings in which the first hints and original plan of action are supposed to have been formed; and was one of sixteen Ministers, or agents of the Ministry, who met weekly at each other's houses, and were united by the name of "Brother."

Being not immediately considered as an obdurate Tory, he conversed indiscriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in the "Tatler," which began in April 1709, confesses the advantages of his conversation, and mentions something contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immerging into political controversy, for the year 1710 produced the "Examiner," of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide system of conduct, and the whole of a public character, is laid open to enquiry, the accuser having the choice of facts must be very unskilful if he does not prevail; but with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to those by which Addison opposed him*.

He wrote in the year 1711 a "Letter to the October Club," a number of Tory Gentlemen sent from the country to Parliament, who formed themselves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raise the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reason, that the Ministers were losing opportunities; that sufficient use was not made of the ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes, and stronger efforts; and demanded the punishment of part, and the dismission of the rest, of those whom they considered as publick robbers.

Their eagerness was not gratified by the Queen, or by Harley. The Queen was probably slow because she was afraid: and Harley was slow because he was doubtful; he was a Tory only by necessity, or for convenience; and, when he had power in his hands, had no settled purpose for which he should employ it; forced to gratify to a certain degree the Tories who supported him, but unwilling to make his reconcilement to the Whigs utterly desperate, he corresponded at once with the two expectants of the Crown, and kept, as has been observed, the succession undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing: and, with the fate of a double dealer, at last he lost his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift seems to have concurred in opinion with the "October Club;" but it was not in his power to quicken the tardiness of Harley, whom he stimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move. Harley, who was perhaps, not quick by nature, became yet more slow by irresolution: and was content

* Mr. Sheridan however says that Addison's last Whig Examiner was published Oct. 12, 1711; and Swift's first Examiner on the 10th of the following November, E.

o hear that dilatoriness lamented as natural, which he applauded in himself is politick.

Without the Tories, however, nothing could be done; and as they were not to be gratified, they must be appeased; and the conduct of the Minister, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plausibly excused.

Early in the next year he published a "Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue," in a Letter to the Earl of Oxford; written without much knowledge of the general nature of language, and without any accurate enquiry into the history of other tongues. The certainty and stability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he proposes to secure by instituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud, to disobey, and which, being renewed by successive elections, would in a short time have differed from itself.

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he published (1712) the "Conduct of the Allies," ten days before the Parliament assembled. The purpose was to persuade the nation to a peace; and never had any writer more success. The people, who had been amused with bonfires and triumphal processions, and looked with idolatry on the general and his friends, and who, as they thought, had made England the arbitress of nations, were confounded between shame and rage, when they found "that mines had been exhausted, and millions destroyed," to secure the Dutch or aggrandize the emperor, without any advantage to ourselves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their own quarrel; and that amongst our enemies we might number our allies.

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then first informed, that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I suppose, did not yet know what he has since written, that a commission was drawn which would have appointed him General for life, had it not become ineffectual by the resolution of Lord Cowper who refused the seal.

"Whatever is received," say the schools, "is received in proportion to "the recipient." The power of a political treatise depends much upon the disposition of the people; the nation was then combustible, and a spark set it on fire. It is boasted, that between November and January eleven thousand were sold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furnished arguments for conversation, speeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary resolutions.

Yet surely, whoever surveys this wonder-working pamphlet with cool perusal, will confess that its efficacy was supplied by the passions of its readers; that it operates by the mere weight of facts, with very little assistance from the hand that produced them.

This year (1712) he published his "Reflections on the Barrier Treaty," which carries on this design of his "Conduct of the Allies," and shews how little regard in that negociation had been shewn to the interest of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by "Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduc-"tion to his third Volume of the History of the Reformation;" a pamphlet which Burnet published as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of Popery. Swift, who seems to have disliked the Bishop with something more than political aversion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to insult.

Swift being now the declared favourite and supposed confidant of the Tory Ministry, was treated by all that depended on the Court with the respect which dependants know how to pay. He soon began to feel part of the misery of greatness; he that could say that he knew him, considered himself as having fortune in his power. Commissions, solicitations, remonstrances, crowded about him; he was expected to do every man's business, to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In assisting those who addressed him, he represents himself as sufficiently diligent; and desires to have others believe, what he probably believed himself, that by his interposition many Whigs of merit, and among them Addison and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has so many petitions which he cannot grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he gratifies, because the preference given to one affords all the rest reason for complaint. "When I give away a "place," said Lewis XIV. "I make an hundred discontented, and one "ungrateful."

Much has been said of the equality and independence which he preserved in his conversation with the Ministers, of the frankness of his remonstrances, and the familiarity of his friendship. In accounts of this kind a few single incidents are set against the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more servile tribute to the Great, than by suffering his liberty in their presence to aggrandize him in his own esteem. Between different ranks of the community there is necessarily some distance: he who is called by his superior to pass the interval, may properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtrusion are rarely produced by magnanimity; nor have often any nobler cause than the pride of importance, and the malice of inferiority. He who knows himself necessary may set, while that necessity lasts, a high value upon himself; as, in a low condition, a servant eminently skilful may be saucy; but he is saucy only because he is servile. Swift appears to have preserved the kindness of the great when they wanted him no longer; and therefore it must be allowed, that the childish freedom, to which he seems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His

His disinterestedness has been likewise mentioned; a strain of heroism, which would have been in his condition romantic and superfluous. Ecclesiastical benefices, when they become vacant, must be given away; and the friends of Power may, if there be no inherent disqualifications, reasonably expect them. Swift accepted (1713) the deanery of St. Patrick, the best preferment that his friends could venture to give him. That Ministry was in a great degree supported by the Clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the "Tale of a Tub," and would not without much discontent and indignation have borne to see him installed in an English Cathedral.

He refused, indeed, fifty pounds from Lord Oxford; but he accepted afterwards a draught of a thousand upon the Exchequer, which was intercepted by the Queen's death, and which he resigned, as he says himself, "multa gemens, with many a groan."

In the midst of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with Ministers, and quarrels with his servant, and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befel him was interesting, and no accounts could be too minute. Whether these diurnal trifles were properly exposed to eyes which had never received any pleasure from the presence of the Dean, may be reasonably doubted: they have, however, some odd attraction; the reader, finding frequent mention of names which he has been used to consider as important goes on in hope of information; and, as there is nothing to fatigue attention if he is disappointed he can hardly complain. It is easy to perceive, from every page, that though ambition prest Swift into a life of bustle, the wish for a life of ease was always returning.

He went to take possession of his deanery, as soon as he had obtained it; but he was not suffered to stay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increased, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his last years.

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed discontented: he procured a second, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcileable: he told them his opinion, that all was lost. This denunciation was contradicted by Oxford; but Bolingbroke whispered that he was right.

Before this violent dissention had shattered the Ministry, Swift had published, in the beginning of the year (1714), "The public Spirit of the "Whigs," in answer to "The Crisis," a pamphlet for which Steele was expelled from the House of Commons. Swift was now so far alienated from Steele, as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and therefore treats him sometimes with contempt, and sometimes with abhorence.

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In this pamphlet the Scotch were mentioned in terms so provoking to that irritable nation, that, resolving "not to be offended with impunity," the Scotch Lords in a body demanded an audience of the Queen, and solicited reparation. A proclamation was issued, in which three hundred pounds was offered for discovery of the author. From this storm he was, as he relates, "secured by a sleight;" of what kind, or by whose prudence, is not known; and such was the increase of his reputation, that the Scottish "Nation applied again that he would be their friend."

He was become so formidable to the Whigs, that his familiarity with the Ministers was clamoured at in Parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, Aislabie and Walpole.

But by the disunion of his great friends, his importance and designs were now at an end; and seeing his services at last useless, he retired about June (1714) into Berkshire, where, in the house of a friend, he wrote what was then suppressed, but has since appeared under the title of "Free thoughts on the present state of Affairs."

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to pass, the death of the Queen broke down at once the whole system of Tory Politicks; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant Whiggism, and shelter himself in unenvied obscurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by Lord Orrery, and Dr. Delany, are so different that the credit of the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be saved but by supposing, what I think is true, that they speak of different times. When Delany says that he was received with respect, he means for the first fortnight, when he came to take legal possession; and when Lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be understood of the time when, after the Queen's death, he became a settled resident.

The Archbishop of Dublin gave him at first some disturbance in the exercise of his jurisdiction; but it was soon discovered, that between prudence and integrity he was seldom in the wrong; and that, when he was right, his spirit did not easily yield to opposition.

Having so lately quitted the tumults of a party, and the intrigues of a court, they still kept his thoughts in agitation, as the sea fluctuates a while when the storm is ceased. He therefore filled his hours with some historical attempts, relating to the "Change of the ministers," and, "the "Conduct of the Ministry." He likewise is said to have written a "History "of the Four last Years of Queen Anne," which he began in her life-time, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never published. It was after his death in the hands of Lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was published, with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas; of which I can only say, that it seemed by no means to correspond with the notions that I had

had formed of it, from a conversation which I once heard between the Earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much against his will, commenced Irishman for life, and was to contrive how he might be best accommodated in a country where he considered himself as in a state of exile. It seems that his first recourse was to piety. The thoughts of death rushed upon him, at this time, with such incessant importunity, that they took possession of his mind, when he first waked, for many years together.

He opened his house by a public table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more visitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnson had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his public days she regulated the table, but appeared at it as a mere guest, like other ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a stated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral, whose house was recommended by the peculiar neatness and pleasantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living, he was first disposed by care to pay some debts which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleasure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not suffered to obstruct the claims of his dignity; he was served in plate, and used to say that he was the poorest gentleman in Ireland that eat upon plate, and the richest that lived without a coach.

How he spent the rest of his time, and how he employed his hours of study, has been enquired with hopelesss curiosity. For who can give an account of another's studies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his business or his leisure.

Soon after (1716), in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnson by Dr. Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houses, as before; nor did she ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was seized with a fit of giddiness. "It would be difficult," says Lord Orrery, "to prove that they were ever afterwards together without a third person."

The Dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends, till, about the year 1720, he, by a pamphlet, recommended to the Irish the use, and consequently the improvement, of their manufacture. For a man to use the productions of his own labour is surely a natural right, and to like best what he makes himself is a natural passion. But to excite this passion, and enforce this right, appeared so criminal to those who had an interest in the English trade, that the printer was imprisoned; and, as Hawkesworth justly observes, the attention of the public being by this outrageous resentment turned upon the proposal, the author was by consequence made popular.

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In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiously distinguished by the name of Vanessa, whose conduct has been already sufficiently discussed, and whose history is too well known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom Decanus the Dean, called Cadenus by transposition of the letters, took pleasure in directing and instructing; till, from being proud of his praise, she grew fond of his person. Swift was then about forty-seven, at an age when vanity is strongly excited by the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be said that Swift should have checked a passion which he never meant to gratify, recourse must be had to that extenuation which he so much despised, "men are but men:" perhaps however he did not at first know his own mind, and, as he represents himself, was undetermined. For his admission of her courtship, and his indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella, no other honest plea can be found, than that he delayed a disagreeable discovery from time to time, dreading the immediate bursts of distress, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herself neglected, and died of disappointment; having ordered by her will the poem to be published, in which Cadenus had proclaimed her excellence, and confessed his love. The effect of the publication upon the Dean and Stella is thus related by Delany:

"I have good reason to believe that they were both greatly shocked and "distressed (though it may be differently) upon this occasion. The Dean "made a tour to the south of Ireland, for about two months, at this time, "to dissipate his thoughts, and give place to obloquy. And Stella re"tired (upon the earnest invitation of the owner) to the house of a cheer"ful, generous, good-natured friend of the Dean's, whom she also much "loved and honoured. There my informer often saw her; and, I have "reason to believe, used his utmost endeavours to relieve, support, and "amuse her, in this sad situation.

"One little incident he told me of, on that occasion, I think I shall ne"ver forget. As her friend was an hospitable, open-hearted man, well"beloved, and largely acquainted, it happened one day that some gentle"men dropt in to dinner, who were strangers to Stella's situation; and as "the poem of Cadenus and Vanessa was then the general topic of conver"sation, one of them said, 'Surely that Vanessa must be an extraordinary "woman, that could inspire the Dean to write so finely upon her.' Mrs. "Johnson smiled, and answered, 'that she thought that point not quite "so clear; for it was well known the Dean could write finely upon a broom"stick."

The great acquisition of esteem and influence was made by the "Dra"pier's Letters" in 1724. One Wood of Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, a man enterprising and rapacious, had, as is said, by a present to the Duchess of Munster, obtained a patent, empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of halfpence and farthings for the kingdom

dom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarrassing scarcity of copper coin; so that it was impossible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money; for the cook or keeper of an ale-house could not refuse to supply a man that had silver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plausible. The scarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old half-pence; and was about to turn his brass into gold, by pouring the treasures of his new mint upon Ireland, when Swift, finding that the metal was debased to an enormous degree, wrote Letters, under the name of M. B. Drapier, to shew the folly of receiving, and the mischief that must ensue, by giving gold and silver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was universally refused; but the governors of Ireland considered resistance to the King's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitshed, then Chief Justice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and sent out the Jury nine times, till by clamour and menaces they were frighted into a special verdict, now presented the Drapier, but could not prevail on the Grand Jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the Privy Council published a proclamation, offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the Fourth Letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printers and trusted only his butler, who transcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, strolled from the house, and staid out all night and part of the next day. There was reason enough to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery, and leave the house; "for," says he, "I know that "my life is in your power, and I will not bear, out of fear, either your "insolence or negligence." The man excused his fault with great submission, and begged that he might be confined in the house while it was in his power to endanger his master: but the Dean resolutely turned him out, without taking farther notice of him, till the term of information had expired, and then received him again. Soon afterwards he ordered him and the rest of the servants into his presence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-servant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blakeney, verger of St. Patrick's; an officer whose income was between thirty and forty pounds a year: yet he still continued for some years to serve his old master as his butler.*

Swift was known from this time by the appellation of The Dean. He was honoured by the populace, as the champion, patron, and instructor of Ireland; and gained such power as, considered both in its extent and du-

* An account somewhat different from this is given by Mr. Sheridan in his Life of Swift, P. 311. E.

ration, scarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher station.

He was from this important year the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble, and by consequence was feared and courted by all to whom the kindness of the traders or the populace was necessary. The Drapier was a sign; the Drapier was a health; and which way soever the eye or the ear was turned, some tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the Drapier.

The benefit was indeed great; he had rescued Ireland from a very oppressive and predatory invasion; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occasion where the public interest was supposed to be involved. Nor did he much scruple to boast his influence; for when, upon some attempts to regulate the coin, Archbishop Boulter, then one of the Justices, accused him of exasperating the people, he exculpated himself by saying, "If I had "lifted up my finger they would have tore you to pieces."

But the pleasure of popularity was soon interrupted by domestic misery. Mrs. Johnson, whose conversation was to him the great softener of the ills of life, began in the year of the Drapier's triumph to decline; and two years afterwards was so wasted with sickness, that her recovery was considered as hopeless.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to pass the winter with him in France; but this call of calamity hastened him to Ireland, where perhaps his presence contributed to restore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now so much at ease, that (1727) he returned to England; where he collected three volumes of Miscellanies in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical preface.

This important year sent likewise into the world "Gulliver's Travels," a production so new and strange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with such avidity, that the first edition was raised before the second could be made; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate. Criticism was for a while lost in wonder; no rules of judgment were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made, the part which gave least pleasure was that which describes the Flying Island, and that which gave most disgust must be the history of the Houyhnhnms.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the king's death arrived; and he kissed the hands of the new King and Queen three days after their accession.

By the Queen, when she was Princess, he had been treated with some distinction, and was well received by her in her exaltation; but whether she gave hopes which she never took care to satisfy, or he formed expectations which

which she never meant to raise, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promise of some medals which she engaged to send him.

I know not whether she had not, in her turn, some reason for complaint. A Letter was sent her, not so much entreating as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Irishwoman, who was then begging subscriptions for her Poems. To this Letter was subscribed the name of Swift, and it has all the appearances of his diction and sentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had some little improprieties. When he was charged with this Letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accusation; but never denied it: he shuffles between cowardice and veracity, and talks big when he says nothing*.

He seemed desirous enough of recommencing courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindness of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Masham had performed in former times; but his flatteries were, like those of other wits, unsuccessful; the Lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was seized not long afterwards by a fit of giddiness, and again heard of the sickness and danger of Mrs. Johnson. He then left the house of Pope, as it seems, with very little ceremony, finding "that two sick friends "cannot live together;" and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester.

He returned to a home of sorrow: poor Stella was sinking into the grave, and, after a languishing decay of about two months, died in her 44th year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life, his papers shew; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved most, aggravated by the consciousness that himself had hastened it.

Beauty and the power of pleasing, the greatest external advantages that woman can desire or possess, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom she had the misfortune to love was, as Delany observes, fond of singularity, and desirous to make a mode of happiness for himself, different from the general course of things and order of Providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland he seems resolved to keep her in his power, and therefore hindered a match sufficiently advantageous, by accumulating unreasonable demands, and prescribing conditions that could not be performed. While she was at her own disposal he did not consider his possession as secure; resentment, ambition, caprice, might separate them; he was therefore resolved to make "assurance double sure," and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectations of all the pleasures of perfect friendship, without the uneasiness of conjugal restraint. But with this state poor Stella was not satisfied; she never was

* It is but justice to the Dean's memory to refer to Mr. Sheridan's Defence of him from this charge. See the Life of Swift, p. 458. E.

never was treated as a wife, and to the world she had the appearance of a mistress. She lived sullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and depravation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that "it was too late." She then gave up herself to sorrowful resentment, and died under the tyranny of him, by whom she was in the highest degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this eccentric tenderness, by which the laws of nature were violated to retain her, curiosity will enquire; but how shall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his testimony may be suspected. Delany and the Irish saw with Swift's eyes, and therefore add little confirmation. That she was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant, in a very high degree, such admiration from such a lover makes it very probable; but she had not much literature, for she could not spell her own language; and of her wit, so loudly vaunted, the smart sayings which Swift himself has collected afford no splendid specimen.

The reader of Swift's "Letter to a Lady on her Marriage," may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for if his general thoughts of women be such as he exhibits, a very little sense in a lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would astonish him. Stella's supremacy, therefore, was perhaps only local; she was great, because her associates were little.

In some Remarks lately published on the Life of Swift, his marriage is mentioned as fabulous, or doubtful; but, alas! poor Stella, as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy story to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany mentions it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a sigh.

The rest of his life was spent in Ireland, in a country to which not even power almost despotic, nor flattery almost idolatrous, could reconcile him. He sometimes wished to visit England, but always found some reason to delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to see him; "but if not," says he, "we must part, as all human beings have "parted."

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his severity exasperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deserted. But he continued his attention to the publick, and wrote from time to time such directions, admonitions, or censures, as the exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In a short poem on the Presbyterians, whom he always regarded with detestation, he bestowed one stricture upon Bettesworth, a lawyer eminent for his insolence to the clergy, which, from very considerable reputation, brought him into immediate and universal contempt. Bettesworth, enraged

at

his disgrace and loss, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the ıthor of that poem? "Mr. Bettesworth, answered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me, that if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author; and therefore I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines."

Bettesworth was so little satisfied with this account, that he publickly rofessed his resolution of a violent and corporeal revenge; but the Inhabiınts of St. Patrick's district embodied themselves in the Dean's defence. ettesworth declared in Parliament, that Swift had deprived him of twelve undred pounds a year.

Swift was popular awhile by another mode of beneficence. He set aside ome hundreds to be lent in small sums to the poor, from five shillings, I hink, to five pounds. He took no interest, and only required that, at reayment, a small fee should be given to the accomptant: but he required hat the day of promised payment should be exactly kept. A severe and unctilious temper is ill qualified for transactions with the poor; the day ras often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been asily foreseen; but for this Swift had no provision of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be sued. A severe creditor has no popular character; vhat then was likely to be said of him who employs the catchpoll under he appearance of charity? The clamour against him was loud, and the esentment of the populace outrageous; he was therefore forced to drop iis scheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor*.

His asperity continually increasing, condemned him to solitude; and is resentment of solitude sharpened his asperity. He was not, however, otally deserted; some men of learning, and some women of elegance, ften visited him; and he wrote from time to time either verse or prose; of iis verses he willingly gave copies, and is supposed to have felt no disconent when he saw them printed. His favourite maxim was, "Vive la ' bagatelle;" he thought trifles a necessary part of life, and perhaps found hem necessary to himself. It seems impossible to him to be idle, and his lisorders made it difficult or dangerous to be long seriously studious, or laoriously diligent. The love of age is always gaining upon age, and he iad one temptation to petty amusements peculiar to himself; whatever he lid, he was sure to hear applauded; and such was his predominance over ll that approached, that all their applauses were probably sincere. He that s much flattered, soon learns to flatter himself: we are commonly taught

* This account is contradicted by Mr. Sheridan, who with great warmth asserts, from his own nowledge, there was not one syllable of truth in this whole account from the beginning to the end. ee *Life of Swift*, p. 457. E.

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our duty by fear or shame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praises?

As his years increased, his fits of giddines and deafness grew more frequent, and his deafness made conversation difficult: they grew likewise more severe, till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called "The Legion "Club," he was seized with a fit so painful, and so long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therfore no liberal entertainer; but was less frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either sex came to him, in expectation of a dinner, his custom was to give every one a shilling, that they might please themselves with their provision. At last his avarice grew too powerful for his kindness; he would refuse a bottle of wine, and in Ireland no man visits where he cannot drink.

Having thus excluded conversation, and desisted from study, he had neither business nor amusement; for having, by some ridiculous resolution or mad vow, determined never to wear spectacles, he could make little use of books in his latter years: his ideas therefore, being neither renovated by discourse, nor increased by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at last his anger was heightened into madness.

He however permitted one book to be published, which had been the production of former years; "Polite Conversation," which appeared in 1738. The "Directions for Servants" was printed soon after his death. These two performances shew a mind incessantly attentive, and when it was not employed upon great things, busy with minute occurrences. It is apparent that he must have had the habit of noting whatever he observed; for such a number of particulars could never have been assembled by the power of recollection.

He grew more violent; and his mental powers declined till (1741) it was found necessary that legal guardians should be appointed of his person and fortune. He now lost distinction. His madness was compounded of rage and fatuity. The last face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway; and her he ceased to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls; but he would never touch it while the servant staid, and at last, after it stood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a-day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which swelled it to the size of an egg, with boils in other parts: he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not easily restrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The

The tumour at last subsided; and a short interval of reason ensuing, in which he knew his physician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery: but in a few days he sunk into lethargic stupidity, motionless, heedless, and speechless. But it is said, that, after a year of total silence, when his housekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birth-day, he answered, "It is all folly; they had better let it alone."

It is remembered that he afterwards spoke now and then, or gave some intimation of a meaning, but at last sunk into a perfect silence, which continued till about the end of October, 1744, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he expired without a struggle.

WHEN Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the Whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the English nation. In the succeeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression; and shewed that wit, confederated with truth, had such force as authority was unable to resist. He said truly of himself, that Ireland "was his debtor." It was from the time when he began first to patronize the Irish, that they date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they reverenced him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works, he has given very different specimens both of sentiments and expression. His "Tale of a Tub" has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.

In his other works is found an equable tenour of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any embarrassment in the complication of clauses, any in consequence in his connections, or abruptness in his transitions.

His

His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilised by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration; he always understands himself: and his readers always understand him: the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge: it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction.

This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained he deserves praise, though perhaps not the highest praise. For purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode, but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade.

By his political education he was associated with the Whigs, but he deserted them when they deserted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme; he continued throughout his life to retain the disposition which he assigns to the "Church-of-England Man," of thinking commonly with the Whigs of the State, and with the Tories of the Church.

He was a churchman rationally zealous; he desired the prosperity, and maintained the honour of the Clergy; of the Dissenters he did not wish to infringe the toleration, but he opposed their encroachments.

To his duty as Dean he was very attentive. He managed the revenues of his church with exact œconomy; and it is said by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs than had ever been in the same time since its first erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor understood music, took care that all the singers were well qualified, admitting none without the testimony of skilful judges.

In his church he restored the practice of weekly communion, and distributed the sacramental elements in the most solemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He read the service "rather with a strong nervous voice than in a graceful manner; his voice was sharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious."

He entered upon the clerical state with hope to excel in preaching; but complained, that, from the time of his political controversies, "he could only preach pamphlets." This censure of himself, if judgment be made from those sermons which have been printed, was unreasonably severe.

His

The suspicions of his irreligion proceeded in a great measure from his dread of hypocrisy; instead of wishing to seem better, he delighted in seeming worse than he was. He went in London to early prayers, lest he should be seen at church; he read prayers to his servants every morning with such dexterous secrecy, that Dr. Delany was six months in his house before he knew it. He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the suspicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himself had formerly asserted, that hypocrisy is less mischievous than open impiety. Dr. Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has justly condemned this part of his character.

The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.

To his domesticks he was naturally rough; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works discover, must have been a master that few could bear. That he was disposed to do his servants good, on important occasions, is no great mitigation; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannick peevishness is perpetual. He did not spare the servants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he said, of one that waited in the room, "That man has, since we "sat to the table, committed fifteen faults." What the faults were, Lord Orrery, from whom I heard the story, had not been attentive enough to discover. My number may perhaps not be exact.

In his œconomy he practised a peculiar and offensive parsimony, without disguise or apology. The practice of saving being once necessary, became habitual, and grew first ridiculous, and at last detestable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleasure, was never suffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpose to which he destined his little accumulations be remembered, with his distribution of occasional charity, it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his successors, but left both Laracor and the Deanery more valuable than he found them. With all this talk of his covetousness and generosity, it should be remembered that he was never rich. The revenue of his Deanery was not much more than seven hundred a year.

His beneficence was not graced with tenderness or civility; he relieved without pity, and assisted without kindness; so that those who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He made a rule to himself to give but one piece at a time, and therefore always stored his pockets with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he seemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himself, without sufficiently considering that singularity, as it implies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which justly provokes the hostility of ridicule; he therefore who indulges peculiar habits is worse than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a story told by Pope* may afford a specimen.

"Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, that is mistaken, by strangers, for "ill nature.—'Tis so odd, that there's no describing it but by facts. I'll "tell you one that first comes into my head. One evening Gay and I went "to see him: you know how intimately we were all acquainted. On our "coming in, 'Heyday, gentlemen, (says the Doctor) what's the meaning "of this visit? How came you to leave the great Lords, that you are so "fond of, to come hither to see a poor Dean'—'Because we would rather "see you than any of them.'—'Ay, any one that did not know so well as I "do, might believe you. But since you are come, I must get some supper for you I suppose.' 'No, Doctor, we have supped already,'—"Supped already? that's impossible! why, 'tis not eight o'clock yet.—"That's very strange; but, if you had not supped, I must have got "something for you.—Let me see, what should I have had? A couple of "lobsters; ay, that would have done very well; two shillings—tarts, a "shilling: but you will drink a glass of wine with me, though you supped so much before your usual time only to spare my pocket?'—'No, "we had rather talk with you than drink with you.'—'But if you had "supped with me, as in all reason you ought to have done, you must "then have drunk with me.—A bottle of wine, two shillings—two and "two is four, and one is five: just two-and-six-pence a piece. There, "Pope, there's half a crown for you, and there's another for you, Sir; "for I won't save any thing by you, I am determined.'—This was all said "and done with his usual seriousness on such occasions, and in spite of "every thing we could say to the contrary, he actually obliged us to take "the money."

In the intercourse of familiar life, he indulged his disposition to petulance and sarcasm, and thought himself injured if the licentiousness of his raillery, the freedom of his censures, or the petulance of his frolicks, was resented or repressed. He predominated over his companions with very high ascendency, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the style of his friend Delany, "to venture to speak to him." This customary superiority soon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift with all his penetration, allowed himself to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occasions, he habitually affects a style of arrogance, and dictates rather than persuades. This authoritative and magisterial lan-

*Spence.

guage

guage he expected to be received as his peculiar mode of jocularity: but he apparently flattered his own arrogance by an assumed imperiousness, in which he was ironical only to the resentful, and to the submissive sufficiently serious.

He told stories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew himself to do well; he was therefore captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, and told the same tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to give room by a pause for any other speaker. Of time, on all occasions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be justly supposed that there was in his conversation, what appears so frequently in his Letters, an affectation of familiarity with the Great, an ambition of momentary equality sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul. But a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power: he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking, if his Letters can be supposed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant; he scarcely speaks of himself but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with insolent superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the Letters that pass between him and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind; that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They shew the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.

When the Queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret for a time the interception of his views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay scenes, important employment, and splendid friendships; but when time had enabled reason to prevail over vexation, the complaints, which at first were natural, became ridiculous because they were useless. But querulousness was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceased to feel. His reiterated wailings persuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an English parish; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected, and Swift still retained the pleasure of complaining.

The greatest difficulty that occurs, in analysing his character, is to discover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almost every other mind shrinks with disgust. The ideas of pleasure, even when criminal, may solicit the imagination; but what has disease, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with this gross corruption before his long visit to Pope. He does not consider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an ascendant mind. But the truth is, that Gulliver had described his Yahoos before the visit; and he that had formed those images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himself to my perception: but now let another be heard who knew him better. Dr. Delany, after long acquaintance, describes him to Lord Orrery in these terms.

"My Lord, when you consider Swift's singular, peculiar, and most variegated vein of wit, always rightly intended (although not always so rightly directed), delightful in many instances, and salutary even where it is most offensive; when you consider his strict truth, his fortitude in resisting oppression and arbitrary power; his fidelity in friendship, his sincere love and zeal for religion, his uprightness in making right resolutions, and his steadiness in adhering to them; his care of his church, its choir, its œconomy, and its income; his attention to all those that preached in his cathedral, in order to their amendment in pronunciation and style; as also his remarkable attention to the interest of his successors, preferably to his own present emoluments; his invincible patriotism, even to a country which he did not love; his very various, well-devised, well-judged, and extensive charities, throughout his life, and his whole fortune (to say nothing of his wife's) conveyed to the same christian purposes at his death; charities, from which he could enjoy no honour, advantage, or satisfaction of any kind in this world; when you consider his ironical and humorous, as well as his serious schemes, for the promotion of true religion and virtue; his success in soliciting for the First Fruits and Twentieths, to the unspeakable benefit of the established Church of Ireland; and his felicity (to rate it no higher) in giving occasion to the building of fifty new churches in London.

"All this considered, the character of his life will appear like that of his writings; they will both bear to be re-considered and re-examined with the utmost attention, and always discover new beauties and excellencies upon every examination.

"They will bear to be considered as the sun, in which the brightness will hide the blemishes; and whenever petulant ignorance, pride, malice, malignity, or envy, interposes to cloud or sully his fame, I will take upon me to pronounce that the eclipse will not last long.

"To

" To conclude—no man ever deserved better of his country than Swift " did of his. A steady, persevering, inflexible friend; a wise, a watch- " ful, and a faithful counsellor, under many severe trials and bitter perse- " cutions, to the manifest hazard both of his liberty and fortune.

" He lived a blessing, he died a benefactor, and his name will ever live " an honour to Ireland."

IN the poetical works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critick can exercise his powers. They are often humourous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they consist of "proper " words in proper places."

To divide this collection into classes, and shew how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote not often to his judgment, but his humour.

It was said, in a Preface to one of the Irish editions, that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellencies and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.

BROOME.

# BROOME.

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheshire, as is said of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's College. Being by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannuated, he was sent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his College he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifyer, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him Poet. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastick rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the "Iliads" into prose, in conjunction with Ozell and Oldisworth. How their several parts were distributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozell boasted as superior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting Sir John Cotton at Madingley, near Cambridge, and gained so much of his esteem, that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the "Iliad;" and in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called "Pope's Miscellanies," many of his early pieces were inserted.

Pope

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the "Iliad" gave encouragement to a version of the "Odyssey," Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's, was always known; he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and at the end of the work some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and eighteenth by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity, after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to enquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note "a lie;" but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know not but by hearsay: Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the Dunciad.

It is evident that, according to Pope's own estimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at least to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured, and there was for some time more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money, and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only named him disrespectfully in the "Dunciad," but quoted him more than once in the "Bathos," as a proficient in the "Art of Sinking;" and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among "the Parrots "who repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tone as makes them seem "their own." I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a Miscellany of Poems, which is inserted, with corrections, in the late compilation.

He never rose to a very high dignity in the church. He was some time rector of Sturston in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards,

terwards, when the King visited Cambridge (1728), became Do Laws. He was (1733) presented by the Crown to the rectory of I in Norfolk, which he held with Oakley Magna in Suffolk, given the Lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the age of Eye in Suffolk; he then resigned Pulham, and retained the two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused h with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the "G "man's Magazine," under the name of Chester.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was a great poet, it be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifyer; his lines are s and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant. His rhymes are times unsuitable; in his "Melancholy," he makes breath rhyme t in one place, and to earth in another. Those faults occur but seldon he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation in his original works, recollection seems to have been his busines than invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is part of hi er's employment to recall the verses of some former poet. Someti copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour t cealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners lines to Fenton,

> Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
> And make afflictions objects of a smile,

brought to my mind some lines on the death of Queen Mary, writ Barnes, of whom I should not have expected to find an imitator:

> But thou, O Muse, whose sweet nepenthean tongue
> Can charm the pangs of death with deathless song;
> Canst *stinging plagues* with easy *thoughts beguile*,
> *Make* pains and tortures *objects of a smile.*

To detect his imitations were tedious and useless. What he takes l dom makes worse; and he cannot be justly thought a mean man Pope chose for an associate, and whose co-operation was conside Pope's enemies as so important, that he was attacked by Henley wi ludicrous distich:

> Pope came off clean with Homer; but they say
> Broome went before, and kindly swept the way.

# POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that that they were of "gentle blood;" that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other dying, in the service of Charles the first; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to shew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the Exchange was never discovered till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linen-draper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shewn remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life*: but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood, His voice, when he was young, was so pleasing, that he was called in fondness "the little Nightingale."

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

*This weakness was so great that he constantly wore stays, as I have been assured by a waterman at Twickenham, who, in lifting him into his boat, had often felt them. His method of taking the air on the water, was to have a sedan chair in the boat, in which he sat with the glasses down. H.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epick poem, with panegyricks on the princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, "thought himself the greatest genius that ever was." Self-confidence is the first requisite of great undertakings. He, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error: but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgement, afterwards destroyed; "Alcander," the epick poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of St. Genevieve. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies it is related, that he translated "Tully on old Age;" and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read "Temple's Essays" and "Locke on human understanding." His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious; for his early pieces shew, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleased with himself easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbal, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, and secretary of state, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance; and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for from his first entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his pastorals, which were shewn to the Poets and Criticks of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree; they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton and Pope, are distinguished among the English Poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been

been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherly wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat criticks with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherly was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he used to ride a hunting in a tye-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now-and-then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of "Statius" into his hands for correction.

Their correspondence afforded the publick its first knowledge of Pope's Epistolary Powers; for his Letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas; and she many years afterwards sold them to Curll, who inserted them in a volume of his Miscellanies.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the Pastorals, and from him Pope received the council from which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of fame; and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy; a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet; and, thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russel-street in Covent-Garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and insatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures; and having excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice.

In

In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another; and, when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of this time he desired only to know, and in the second he endeavoured to judge.

The Pastorals, which had been for some time handed about among poets and criticks, were at last printed (1709,) in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope.

The same year was written the "Essay on Criticism;" a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards; and, being praised by Addison in the "Spectator" with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he says, "found himself attacked, without any "manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person, instead of "his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when "all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune; and not only saw that "this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood "and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypo-"crite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, "friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity."

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions; whether the Essay will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be young and raw.

"First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his last ability, and "hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while "this little author struts, and affects the dictatorian air, he plainly shews, "that at the same time he is under the rod; and, while he pretends to give "law to others, is a pedantick slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he "hath, like school-boys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, "he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, "he is almost perpetually in the wrong."

All

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages in these lines:

> There are whom heav'n has bless'd with store of wit,
> Yet want as much again to manage it;
> For wit and judgment ever are at strife—

It is apparent that wit has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called wit, is truly judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. "By the way, what "rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had es- "poused some antiquated Muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of "impotence from some superannuated sinner; and, having been p—xed by "her former spouse, has got the gout in her decrepid age, which makes her "hobble so damnably." This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called "bulls." The first edition had this line:

> What is this wit—
> Where wanted, scorn'd; and envied where acquir'd?

"How," says the critic, "can wit be scorn'd where it is not? Is not this "a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land? The person that wants "this wit may indeed be scorned, but the scorn shews the honour which "the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper use, by correcting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis's criticism: it remains that justice be done to his delicacy. "For his acquaintance (says "Dennis) he names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means the qualification which "this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critick, it being very certain "that he was, like this Essayer, a very indifferent poet; he loved to be well- "dressed; and I remember a little young gentleman whom Mr. Walsh "used to take into his company as a double foil to his person and capa- "city.—Enquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young, short, "squab gentleman, the very bow of the God of Love, and tell me whether "he be a proper author to make personal reflections?—He may extol the "ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern; "for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had "by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that "of one of his poems, the life of half a day.—Let the person of a gentleman

"of

marked only by the first and last letter, C—l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended Lady, who liked it well enough to shew it; and with the usual process of literary transactions, the author dreading a surreptitious edition was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired; the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness that, in the character of Sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English Convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison "merum sal." Pope, however saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was "a delicious little thing," and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. The "Rape of the Lock" stands forward in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shewn before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some

some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the public was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published the "Temple of Fame," which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent Motion as exhibited by Sculpture.

Of the Epistle from "Eloisa to Abelard," I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of prior's "Nut-brown Maid." How much he had surpassed Prior's work, it is not necessary to mention, when perhaps it may be said with justice, that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it.

In the next year (1713) he published "Windsor Forest;" of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his Pastorals; and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins, we are not told. The lines relating to the Peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is said, that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of "Windsor Forest?" If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addison migh feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for, having been consulted in the revisal of "Cato," he introduced it by a Prologue; and, when Dennis published his Remarks, undertook not indeed to vindicate but to revenge his friend, by, a "Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis."

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for says Pope in a letter to him, "indeed your opinion "that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but

"I felt

"I felt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against my-"self (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry)." Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the "Guardian" the ironical comparison between the Pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writers design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal this discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of painting with that of poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-sighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter; he tried, however, how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield*: if this was taken from life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastick verses to Jervas, which certainly shew his power as a poet; but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's Prologues; and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would shew them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment; and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books†.

He therefore resolved to try how far the favour of the public extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the "Iliad," with large notes.

To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work, for which this expedient was em-

* It is still at Caen Wood. N. † Spence.

ployed

ployed, is said to have been Dryden's "Virgil;"* and it had been tried again with great success when the "Tatlers" were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent: he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the public with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes, he offered an English "Iliad" to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received; and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original; but proposed no means by which he might live without it. Addison recommended caution and moderation, and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be universally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor on condition of supplying, at his own expence, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the Quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small Folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner; and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books so little inferior to the Quartos, that, by a fraud of trade, those Folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in Folio, for two guineas a volume; of the small Folio, having printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in the other volumes to a thousand.

* Earlier than this, viz. in 1688, Milton's "Paradise Lost" had been published with great success by subscription, in folio, under the patronage of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Somers, E.

It

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English "Iliad" was printed in Holland in Duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his folio at once into a Duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but indeed great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends, who patronised his subscription, began to be frighted at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy; had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, "that "somebody would hang him*."

This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly fifty verses a day, which would shew him by an easy computation the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him, defame him.

He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor; and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles because he had contributed to the "Guardian," which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politicks were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer. To these he made no public opposition; but in one of his Letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance; and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary in trans-

* Spence,

lating

lating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produces ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed, that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or modern languages. I have read of a man who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty: and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who fin much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the musick of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of "Eobanus Hessus," an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of La Valteire and Dacier, and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogilby. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodize; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able: some other was therefore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities; and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator "in part upon the Iliad;" and it appears from Fenton's Letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted; another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third that was recommended by Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known

to

to the learned world, who complained that Pope having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosty to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: "I think at first sight that his perfor-" mances is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the " 17th book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here " enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep " them till I receive your order."

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it: and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the "Iliad," with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year; and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The "Iliad," containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been dispatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may seem to have been slow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility it is natural to suppose, that as much as has been done to-day may be done to-morrow; but on the morrow some difficulty immerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against Time, has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have over-rated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five-hundred and seventy-five. The copies for which subscriptions were given were six hundred and fifty four; and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For those copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for public employment

ployment, but never proposed a pension. While the translation of "Homer" was in its progress, Mr. Craggs, then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want, by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English "Iliad." It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen; and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of Learning.

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the "Iliad," which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty reposited in the Museum.

Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit first the printed lines; then, in a small print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print which are given in Italicks, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the first book stands thus:

The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing,
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.

The stern Pelides' *rage*, O Goddess, sing.
wrath
Of all the woes *of Greece* the fatal spring,
Grecian
That strew'd with *warriors* dead the Phrygian plain,
heroes
And *peopled the dark hell with heroes* slain;
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Whose limbs, unburied on the hostile shore,
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,
Since first *Atrides* and *Achilles* strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Declare, O Muse, in what ill-fated hour
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power?
Latona's son a dire contagion spread,
And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead;
The King of men his reverend priest defy'd,
And for the king's offence the people dy'd.

Declare, O Goddess, what offended Power
Enflam'd their *rage*, in that *ill'omen'd* hour;
anger fatal, hapless
Phœbus himself the *dire* debate procur'd;
fierce
T' avenge the wrongs his injur'd priest endured
For this the God a dire infection spread,
And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead:
The King of Men the Sacred Sire defy'd,
And for the king's offence the people dy'd.

For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable Father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands,
By these he begs, and lowly bending down,
Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown.

For Chryses sought by *presents to regain*
costly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable Father stands,
Apollo's awful ensign grac'd his hands,
By these he begs, and lowly bending down
*The golden sceptre* and the laurel crown,
Presents the sceptre
*For these as ensigns of his God he bore,*
*The God that sends his golden shafts afar*;
The low on earth, the venerable man,
Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He sued to all, but chief implored for grace.
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race;
Ye kings and warriours may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;

May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

To all he sued, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race.
Ye *sons of Atreus*, may your vows be crown'd,
Kings and warriors
*Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours crown'd*;
*So may the Gods your arms with conquest bless*,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
*Till* *laid*
*And crown your labours with deserv'd success*;
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again;
If mercy fail, yet let my present move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain,
And give my daughter to these arms again:
*Receive my gifts*; if mercy fails, yet let my present move,
And fear *the God that deals his darts around*,
avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent declare
The priest to reverence, and release the fair.
Not so Atrides; he with kingly pride,
Repuls'd the sacred Sire, and thus reply'd.

He said, the Greeks their joint assent declare,
*The father said, the gen'rous Greeks relent*,
T' accept the ransom, and release the fair:
*Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent*:
Not so *the tyrant*, he, with kingly pride,
Atrides,
Repuls'd the sacred Sire, and thus reply'd
[Not so the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first book, I am told that there was yet former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the second book varies very little from the printed age, and is therefore set down without any parallel; the few differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye;
Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie;
Th' Immortals slumber'd on their thrones above,
All but the ever watchful eye of Jove.
To honour Theti's son he bends his care,
And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war.

Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight,
And thus *commands* the vision of the night:
directs
Fly hence, delusive dream, and, light as air,
To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;
Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train,
March all his legions to the dusty plain.
*Now tell the King* 'tis given him to destroy
Declare ev'n now
The lofty *walls* of wide extended Troy;
tow'rs
For now no more the Gods with Fate contend;
At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end.
Destruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,
hangs
And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall.

## Invocation to the Catalogue of Ships.

Say, Virgins, seated round the throne divine,
All-knowing Goddesses! immortal Nine!
Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeasured height,
And hell's abyss, hide nothing from your sight,
(We wretched mortals! lost in doubts below,
But guess by rumour, and but boast we know)
Oh say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of fame,
Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction came!
To count them all demands a thousand tongues,
A throat of brass and adamantine lungs.

Now, Virgin Goddesses, immortal Nine!
That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,
Who see through heaven and earth, and hell profound,
And all things know, and all things can resound;
Relate what armies sought the Trojan land,
What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command;
(For doubtful Fame distracts mankind below,
And nothing can we tell, and nothing know)
Without your aid, to count th' unnumbered train,
A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues were vain.

*Book* V. *v.* 1.

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires:
Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,
And crown her hero with distinguish'd praise,
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray;

Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her fires;
force,
O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raise,
Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to praise,
his deathless
And crown her hero with *immortal* praise;
distinguish'd
*Bright from* his beamy *crest* the lightnings play,
High on helm
From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray,
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray.
The Goddess with her breath the flame supplies,
Bright as the stars whose fires in Autumn rise;
Her breath divine thick streaming flames supplies,
Bright as the stars that fires the autumnal skies;
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

When first he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And bath'd in ocean shoots a keener light.
Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd,
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd;
Onward she drives him furious to engage,
Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage.

When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And gilds old Ocean with a blaze of light,
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies,
Fresh from the deep, and gilds the seas and skies.
Such glories Pallas on her chief bestow'd,
Such sparkling rays from his bright armour flow'd,
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd,
Onward she drives him *headlong* to engage,
furious
Where the *war bleeds*, and where the *fiercest* rage.
fight burns, thickest

The sons of Dares first the combat sought.
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;
In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,
The sons to toils of glorious battle bred;

There lived a Trojan—Dares was his name,
The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame;
The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault.

*Conclusion of Book* VIII. *v.* 687.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head:
Then shine the vales—the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflection of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires:
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field;
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

As when in stillness of the silent night,
As when the moon in all her lustre bright,
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's *clear* azure *sheds* her *silver* light;
pure spreads sacred
As still in air the trembling lustre stood,
And o'er its golden border shoots a flood;
When *no loose gale* disturbs the deep serene,
not a breath
And *no dim* cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
not a
Around her silver throne the planets glow,
And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,
o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds,
O'er the dark trees a yellower *green* they shed,
gleam
verdure
And tip with silver all the *mountain* heads
forest
And tip with silver every mountain's head.
The vallies open, and the forests rise,
The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise,

Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
All nature stands reveal'd before our eyes;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.
The conscious shepherd, joyful at the sight,
Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.
The conscious *swains rejoicing at the* sight
shepherds gazing with delight
Eye the blue vault, and bless the *vivid* light.
glorious,
useful
So many flames before *the navy* blaze,
proud Ilion
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays,
Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,
And tip the distant spires with fainter beams;
The long reflexions of the distant fires
Gild the high walls, and trembles on the spires;
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires;
A thousand fires at distant stations bright,
Gild the dark prospect and dispel the night.

these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights ce the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance 'last, will naturally desire a greater number; but most other readers ready tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers.

e "Iliad" was published volume by volume, as the translation pro- d; the four first books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name criticism, or poetry, was desirous of such intelligence as might enable o talk upon the popular topick. Halifax, who, by having been first a and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rsal Pope afterwards gave the following account*.

The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really sessed of it.—When I had finished the two or three first books of my nslation of the "Iliad," that Lord desired to have the pleasure of hearing m read at his house--Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the ding. In four or five places, Lord Halifax stopt me very civilly, and, h a speech each time much of the same kind, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. pe; but there is something in that passage that does not quite please . Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your lei- e.—I am sure you can give it a little turn.'—I returned from Lord Ha- x's with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and, as we were going along, was ing to the Doctor, that my Lord had laid me under a great deal of dif- ılty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking r the passages almost ever since, and could not guess at what it was

* Spence.

"that

" that offended his Lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at " my embarrassment; said, I had not been long enough acquainted with " Lord Halifax to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about " looking those places over and over when I got home. " All you need " do (says he) is to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Halifax two " or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those pas- " sages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much " longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.' I followed " his advice; waited on Lord Halifax some time after; said, I hoped he " would find his objections to those passages removed; read them to him " exactly as they were at first; and his Lordship was extremely pleased " with them, and cried out, 'Ay, now they are perfectly right: nothing can " be better."

It is seldom that the great or the wise suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single Letter (Dec. 1, 1714), in which Pope says, " I am obliged to you, both for the favours you have done me, " and those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory, " when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome or solicitous, it " must not be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your Lordship " may cause me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the coun- " try, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a " small one It is indeed a high strain of generosity in you to think of " making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to di- " vert you some few hours: but, if I may have leave to add it is because " you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better " reason; for I must of consequence be very much (as I sincerely am, " your's, &c."

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude; and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be " troublesome out of gratitude, not expecta- " tion." Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence; and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals

in

in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible by themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of these two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, "nothing but rumour has "reached, and who has no personal knowledge."

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his Prologue to "Cato," by his abuse of Dennis, and with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the "Dialogues "on Medals," of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed, that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened: and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously, or insidiously, quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many; and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the Proposals for the "Iliad," the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleased himself (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. "But," says he, "as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and "seems to have no very just one in regard to me, so I must own to you I "expect nothing but civility from him." In the same Letter he mentions Philips, as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but, in a Letter to Addison, he expresses some consciousness of behaviour, inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription, there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

"Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow "from every body but me, who, I confess, could not but despise him. "When I came to the anti-chamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift was "the principal man of talk and business, and acted as master of requests. "Then he instructed a young nobleman that the *best poet in England* was "Mr. Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English "verse, for which *he must have them all subscribe*; for, says he, the author "*shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankness and spirit; as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said that he, being now engaged in public business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation; nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that he should not, by too much arrogance, aliene the publick.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependence, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the public cost, and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of "Homer" was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first "Iliad," for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the criticks and poets divided into factions. "I," says Pope, "have the "town, that is, the mob, on my side; but it is not uncommon for the "smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers—I appeal "to the people as my rightful judges, and, while they are not inclined to "condemn me, shall not fear the high-flyers at Button's." This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written; and sometimes said that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of "Homer."

Pope was now sufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared, and fairly

fairly estimated. This design seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended at another time a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But while he was thus meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow; the voice of the public were not long divided, and the preference was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself; but if he knew it in Addison's life time, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope*.

"Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses, "and conversations: and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherly, in which "he had abused both me and my relations very grosly. Lord Warwick him- "self told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well "with Mr. Addison, that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled "friendship between us; and, to convince me of what he had said, assured "me, that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and "had given him ten guineas after they were published. The next day, "while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison "to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; "that if I was to speak severely of him, in return for it, it should be not in "such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his "faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in "the following manner: I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since "been called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly "ever after†."

The verses on Addison when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verses mention; and being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it with fossile bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured



* Spence.

† See however the Life of Addison in the Biographia Britannica, last ed. E.

deavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden, and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity forced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amusements seem frivolous and childish; whether it be that men conscious of great reputation think themselves above the reach of censure, and safe in the admission of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder, like him who, having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch.

While the volumes of his "Homer" were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a Preface, written with great sprightliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted; other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed.

In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the "Iliad" was at last completed in 1720. The splendor and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities. Burnet, who was afterwards a judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called "Homerides" before it was published. Ducket likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, whoever his criticks were, their writings are lost; and the names which are preserved, are preserved in the "Dunciad."

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price, and for a while he thought himself the Lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long; and he seems to have waked

waked soon enough to get clear with the loss of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise.

He gave the same year (1721) an edition of "Shakspeare." His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakspeare's plays in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed. The reputation of that edition indeed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called "Shakespeare Restored," and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied, by the desire of humbling a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collaters, commentators, and verbal criticks; and hoped to persuade the world, that he miscaried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded with great skill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakspeare by Dryden; and he drew the public attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the "Iliad," resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the "Odyssey," in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of saying that he had "translated" the "Odyssey," as he had said of the "Iliad," he says that he had "undertaken" a translation: and in the proposals, the subscription is said to be not solely for his own

"Dunces" with great exultation; and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for a while his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor; for nobody believes that the letters in the "Bathos" were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was pesented to the King and Queen by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which, by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters, of those whom he had satirised, was made intelligible and diverting. The criticks had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decypher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effects of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated, as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity, which had for a time been appeased by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon the 'Rape of the Lock.' Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with "pious passion," pretended that his moral character was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him, by changing "pious passion" to "cordial friendship;" and by a note, in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologize; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The "Dunciad," in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part were written by Dr. Arbuthnot; and an apologetical Letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon Dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on "Taste," in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he

he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of the thousand pounds Pope publickly denied; but from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind dissimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory letter to the Duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his Letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, "owns that such criticks can intimidate him, nay almost "persuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves." The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. "There is nothing," says Juvenal, "that a man will not be-"lieve in his own favour." Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him intreated and implored; and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible, and when therefore the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three; but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was

gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some enquiry, was a publication of Letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of Curll, a rapacious bookseller of no good fame, were by him printed and sold. This volume containing some Letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curll appeared at the bar, and knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence. "He has," said Curll, "a knack at versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him." When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curll went away triumphant; and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorised to use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the transaction, it is reasonable to believe, because no falſhood was ever detected; and when some years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them publick, that they were sent at once to two booksellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey; and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them publick was the only purpose may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers, shewed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the Impression.

It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence, thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some Letters which a very good or a very wise man would wish suppressed; but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From

From the perusal of these Letters, Mr. Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him, and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that, when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost.

This however Pope did not accept; but in time solicited a subscription for a Quarto volume, which appeared (1737) I believe, with sufficient profit. In the Preface he tells, that his Letters were reposited in a friends library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the Preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the public for such an incident; and to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter who was employed in clandestine negociations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll.

When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but, as the facts were minute, and the characters, being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded; they awakened no popular kindness or resentment; the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as a contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did not talk of it. Not much therefore was added by it to fame or envy; nor do I remember that it produced either publick praise or publick censure.

It had however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language has few Letters, except those of statesmen. Howel indeed, about a century ago, published his Letters, which are commended by Morhoff and which alone of his hundred volumes continue his memory. Loveday's Letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Philips's [Orinda's] are equally neglected; and those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival, living or dead.

Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison: but it must be remembered, that he had the power of favouring himself: he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured: and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest, except one long Letter by Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head;

Swift

Swift perhaps like a man who remembered that he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind.

Before these Letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of Ethicks, under the title of an "Essay "on Man;" which, if his Letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open and doubtless many secret enemies. The "Dunces" were yet smarting with the war; and the superiority which he publickly arrogated disposed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given says Warburton, to every man except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Those friends of Pope, that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With these precautions, in 1733 was published the first part of the "Essay "on Man." There had been for some time a report that Pope was busy upon a System of Morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied.

The subsequent editions of the first Epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend

Expatiate freely o'er this scene of man,
A mighty maze *of walks without a plan*,

For which he wrote afterwards,

A mighty maze, *but not without a plan*:

for,

for, if there was no plan, it was in vain to describe or trace the maze. The other alteration was of these lines.

And spite of pride, *and in thy reason's spite,*
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:

but having afterwards discovered, or been shewn, that the "truth" which subsisted "in spite of reason" could not be very "clear," he substituted

And spite of pride, *in erring reason's spite.*

To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The second and third Epistles were published; and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734 he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the conclusion it is sufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the "Essay on Man" was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, has been reported, but hardly can be true. The Essay plainly appears the fabrick of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles; the order, illustration, and embellishments, must all be Pope's.

These principles is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers; and the Essay abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that as innocence is unsuspicious, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of Logick, and his "Examen de Pyrrhonisme," and, however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure.

His

His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of Theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and therefore it was not long before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him a haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman Emperors determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves: his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A Letter was produced, when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, "Dryden I observe borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius: Milton out of pride, and Addison out of modesty." And when Theobald published "Shakspeare," in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion; and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence and therefore it must be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted, and dismissed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton,

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the "Essay on Man," in the literary journal of that time called "The Republick of Letters."

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender, the following Letter evidently shews:

"SIR, April 11, 1739.

"I have just received from Mr. R. two more of your Letters. It is in "the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this; but I cannot help thanking "you in particular for your third Letter, which is so extremely clear, short "and full, that I think Mr. Crousaz ought never to have another answer, "and deserved not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too much "honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems; for you "have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. "It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your "own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified, "I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. "I know I meant just what you explain; but I did not explain my own "meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself; but "you express me better than I could express myself. Pray accept the sin- "cerest acknowledgements. I cannot but wish these Letters were put together "in one Book, and intend (with your leave) to procure a translation of "part at least, or of all of them into French; but I shall not proceed a step "without your consent and opinion, &c.

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him without his own consent an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged, with his eyes open on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion.

From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr. Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's-Inn, and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishoprick. When he died, he left him the property of his works; a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand pounds.

Pope's fondness for the "Essay on Man" appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's "Solomon," was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was for that purpose some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished; and, by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of "Paradise Lost." Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should turn his Essay into Latin prose; but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time *among the Great*, with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French Minister, an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness.

It was said, that, when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swift, who represents him as "refusing the visits of a Queen," because he knew that what had never been offered had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality, supposed to be contained in the "Essay on Man," it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the "Use of Riches," a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed*.

Into this poem some hints are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrl, the Man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his publick

* Spence,

works

works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from *five hundred a year*. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrl was a man of known integrity, and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the minister of the place; and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man, being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantick and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shewn to be possible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with some indignation the inscription on the Monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea; for he calls that an "Epistle to Bathurst, in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his "Characters of "Men," written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the *Ruling Passion*, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propension.

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of money. Those indeed who attain any excellence commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must be at least allowed that this *ruling Passion*, antecedent to reason and observation, must have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exist; nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contra-distinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests

interests which makes the happiness of a country is possible only to those whom enquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false: its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or over-ruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of Nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his *ruling Passion*.

Pope has formed his theory with so little skill, that, in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the "Characters of Men" he added soon after, in an Epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the "Characters of Women." This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the publick was informed, by an advertisement, that it contained *no Character drawn from the Life*; an assertion which Pope probably did not expect or wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his reader's sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them in a note that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was *Vice too high* to be yet exposed.

The time however soon came, in which it was safe to display the Dutchess of Marlborough under the name of *Atossa*; and her character was inserted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740) Imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once as was suspected without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarised, by adopting their sentiments to modern topicks, by making Horace say of Shakspeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it further than any former poet.

He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's Satires, which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl

Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the publick. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's Address *à son Esprit*, was published in January, 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted, that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliance of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the publick. He vindicates himself from censures; and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindness and respect.

Into this poem are interwoven several paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the satirical lines upon Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,

> Who would not smile if such a man there be?
> Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

Then,

> Who would not grieve if such a man there be?
> Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

At last it is,

> Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the Ministry; and being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets*, had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps cannot now be easily known: he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls "Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure;" and hints that his father was a *hatter*. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose: the verses are in this poem; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his Letters, but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last Satires, of the general kind, were two Dialogues, named, from the year in which they were published, "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight."

* Intituled "Sedition and Defamation displayed," 8vo. 1733. E.

eight." In these poems many are praised and many are reproached. Pope was then entangled in the opposition; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the Ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shewn: he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending, through much more violent conflicts of faction.

In the first Dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses "low-born Allen." Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into "humble Allen."

In the second Dialogue he took some liberty with one of the Foxes, among others; which Fox, in a reply to Lyttleton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the Legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called "Manners," together with Dodsley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and escaped; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope, than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion, that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money; he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment; till at last he began to think he should be more safe if he were less busy.

The "Memoirs of Scriblerus," published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the "Scriblerus Club." Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious Life of an infatuated Scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage, as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood

understood but by the learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt.

For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality; for besides its general resemblance to Don Quixote, there will be found in it particular imitations of the History of Mr. Ouffle.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his Travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small selection from the Italians, who wrote in Latin, had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man * who concealed his name, but whom his Preface shews to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured.

He did not sink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his "Essay on Man," of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift.

"March 25, 1736.

"If ever I write any more Epistles in verse, one of them shall be addressed "to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what "bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to say, "more finished than any of the rest. The subject is large, and will divide "into four Epistles, which naturally follow the 'Essay on Man;' viz. 1. Of "the Extent and Limits of Human Reason and Science. 2. A View of the "useful and therefore attainable, and of the unuseful and therefore unattainable, Arts. 3. Of the Nature, Ends, Application, and Use of different Capacities. 4. Of the Use of Learning, of the Science of the World, "and of Wit. It will conclude with a satire against the Misapplication of "all these, exemplified by Pictures, Characters, and Examples."

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's

* Since discovered to have been Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester. E.

burton's request, another book to the "Dunciad," of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the imitations of Horace he has liberally enough praised the "Careless Husband." In the "Dunciad," among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his "Apology," complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, "because," says he, "I never have offended him."

It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollified by this submissive gentleness, but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his satires, and again in his epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the "Dunciad" attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the Laureat, he satirised those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great.

The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the "Three Hours after Marriage" had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played Bayes in the Rehearsal; and, as it had been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a Mummy and a Crocodile. "This," says he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated "contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of a "Wit out of his senses;" to which he replied, "that he would take no "other notice of what was said by so particular a man than to declare, that, "as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation." He shews his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

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The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expence of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody enquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity.

He should therefore have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shewn as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose: when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain.

But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and to shew that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the "Dunciad," in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry, and sluggish pertinacy of Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the "Dunciad;" but he had the fate of "Cassandra;" I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he destroyed its efficacy; for, by shewing that what he had said of one he was ready to say of another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpye, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the "Dunciad" with another pamphlet, which, Pope said, "would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him;" but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate, that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, "These things are my diversion." They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his

 feature

features writhen with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revisal and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his Epick Poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject therefore was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and I think without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead, by which it appears, that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he places them.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, "going down the hill." He had for at least five years been afflicted with an asthma and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man, who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physick, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the terrace, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the Lady; who, when he came to her, asked, "What, is he not dead yet?" She is said to have neglected him with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave, she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience, or, though he was offended

offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May 1744 his death was approaching*; on the sixth, he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, "It has so." And added, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender "a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind." At another time he said, "I have known Pope these thirty years, and value "myself more in his friendship than"—his grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, "I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for "putting me in mind of it."

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said, "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and "indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue."

He died in the evening of the 30th day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother; where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors, first to Lord Bolingbroke, and if he should not be living to the Earl of Marchmont, undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time, Dodsley the bookseller, went to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was "reserved for the next age."

He lost, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called "The Patriot King," had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed according to the author's direction among his friends, and



* Spence.

Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and to retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope, better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction, till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance excited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last ſtruggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the publick, with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always something criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced what cannot be denied that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he enquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shewn to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice, for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and, if left to himself, would be useless.

Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in "A Letter to the most impudent man living."

He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcileable dislike, and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to refuse any legacy from Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or perhaps, with the prejudice

of

a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied ith her demand, and poluted his will with female resentment. Allen ac- pted the legacy, which he gave to the Hospital at Bath, observing that ope was always a bad accomptant, and that if to 150l. he had put a cypher ore, he had come nearer to the truth*.

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THE person of Pope is well-known not to have been formed by the nicest odel. He has in the account of the "Little Club," compared himself to spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. e is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution iginally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily dis- rted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His ature was so low, that to bring him to a level with common tables, it as necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his es were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were much disordered, that his life was a "long disease." His most frequent sailant was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was commu- icated by a female domestick of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps ter the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need f female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind f fur doublet, under a shirt of a very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. Vhen he rose, he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarce ble to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel aistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he en- arged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off

* This account of the difference betwen Pope and Mr. Allen is not so circumstantial as it was in ohnson's power to have made it. The particulars communicated to him concerning it he was too idolent to commit to writing; the business of this note is to supply his omissions.

Upon an invitation in which Mrs. Blount was included, Mr. Pope made a visit to Mr. Allen at rior-Park, and having occasion to go to Bristol for a few days, left Mrs. Blount behind him. In his sence Mrs. Blount, who was of the Romish persuasion, signified an inclination to go to the Popish apel at Bath, and desired of Mr. Allen the use of his Chariot for the purpose; but he being at at time mayor of the city, suggested the impropriety of having his carriage seen at the door of place of worship, to which as a magistrate he was at least restrained from giving a sanction, and ight be required to suppress, and therefore desired to be excused. Mrs. Blount resented this refusal, nd told Pope of it at his return, and so infected him with her rage that they both left the house rruptly.

An instance of the like negligence may be noted in his relation of Pope's love of painting, which ffers much from the information I gave him on that head. A picture of Betterton, certainly copied om Kneller by Pope, Lord Mansfield once shewed me at Kenwood-house, adding that it was the nly one he ever finished, for that the weakness of his eyes was an obstruction to his use of the ncil. H.

off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black with a tye-wig, and a little sword.

The indulgence and accomodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour, as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

*C'est que l'enfant toûjours est homme,*
*C'est que l'homme est toûjours enfant.*

When he wanted to sleep he "nodded in company;" and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of his servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they neglected their business, alledged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome: but he was careful to recompence her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in a house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to what pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion, and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by a javelin or a sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a confirmation

ation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertina-ous diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and ideavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." If, at the house of his friends, wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain rms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though hen it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been commended. Thus he teized Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He actised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to y, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and rnips." His unjustifiable impression of the "Patriot King," as it can be iputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased mself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. e may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was dis-iguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable that, so near his time, much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he s said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of servation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One ophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his scription for Shakspeare was defended by the authority of "Patrick," he plied—"horresco referens—that "he would allow the publisher of a Dic-ionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful, and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capricisly resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one uld tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages an the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by ady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing s peevishness, could by no intreaties be restrained from contradicting him, l their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other litted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular, with servants or inferiors; but no merriment either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to ghter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. aving determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, d therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expence suitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; t it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the prac-e of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in remaining copy of the "Iliad," by which perhaps in five years five

shillings

shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and having himself taken two small glasses, would retire and say "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all." He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity*.

Of this fortune, which as it arose from public approbation was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his Letters, and in his Poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topick of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility, a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale, he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his "Highness's dog."

His admiration of the Great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his "Iliad" to Congreve with a magnanimity of which the praise had been compleat, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the Letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy

* A part of it arose from an annuity of two hundred pounds a year, which he had purchased either of the last Duke of Buckinghamshire, or the Dutchess his mother, and which was charged on some estate of that family. The deed by which it was granted was some years in my custody. It

intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the "Golden Age," and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations of fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by designs his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a Letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known, and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the Letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another, to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early Letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition* to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topicks is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when he has just nothing else to do; yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he had always some poetical scheme in his head. It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and Lord Oxford's domestick related, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his criticks, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of Kings, and proclaims that "he never sees Courts." Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, "How he could love a Prince while he disliked "Kings?"

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmits of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge, to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper; he was sufficiently *a fool to Fame*, and his fault was, that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his Letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerk of the Post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; "after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and "the world too, if it pleases;" and they can live together, and "shew what

"friends

"friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a publick character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimickry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study "and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment, His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year, that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant: his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself; and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen, in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance, to be used if any provocation should be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated; those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and when he wrote his "Essay on Criticism" had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of Nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his "Essay on Man," when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, "More than I expected." His frequent references to history, his allusions

to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditations suggested, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and, however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion; and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their production only when,

in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to a few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topick; he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birth-day, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection: it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired

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to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight;" of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave "him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the "press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the "Iliad," and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the "Essay on Criticism" received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastick, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform.

Dryden

Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he had brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestick necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination.

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THE Works of Pope are now to be distinctly examined, not so much with attention to slight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by Pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience; and, exhibiting only the simple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep enquiry. Pope's pastorals are not however composed but with close thought; they have reference to the times of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets.

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His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the *Zephyrs* are made *to lament in silence.*

To charge these pastorals with want of invention, is to require what was never intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to shew his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language, and skill in metre, to exhibit a series of versification, which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation.

The design of "Windsor Forest" is evidently designed from "Cooper's "Hill," with some attention to Waller's poem on "The Park;" but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shewn, must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspence, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader.

But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of "Windsor Forest" which deserves least praise are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene, the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of *Lodona.* Addison had in his "Campaign" derided the Rivers that "rise from their oozy beds" to tell stories of heroes; and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural, but lately censured. The story of *Lodona* is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The "Temple of Fame" has, as Steele warmly declared, "a thousand beauties." Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved, the allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected, and learnedly displayed: yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice, but is turned silently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the "Messiah" excels the "Pollio" is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.

The "Verses on the Unfortunate Lady" have drawn much attention by the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with respect; and they must be

allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the Lady or her Guardian. History relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the uncle to detestation for his pride; the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an uncle, but never by his pride. On such an occasion a poet may be allowed to be obscure, but inconsistency never can be right*.

The "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" was undertaken at the desire of Steele: in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried, yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable; the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.

Both the odes want the essential constituent of metrical compositions the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alledged, that Pindar is said by Horace to have written *numeris lege solutis*; but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed: and perhaps the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his Criticisms upon a Greek Exercise, which Cobb had presented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at last, "Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one."

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds.

The second consists of hyperbolical common-places, easily to be found, and perhaps without much difficulty to be as well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

The

* The account herein before given of this Lady and her catastrophe, cited by Johnson from Ruffhead with a kind of acquiescence in the truth thereof, seems no other than might have been extracted from the verses themselves. I have in my possession a letter to Dr. Johnson, conveying the name of the Lady, and a reference to a gentleman well known in the literary world for her history. Him I have seen; and from a memorandum of some particulars to the purpose communicated to him by a lady of quality, he informs me, that the unfortunate lady's name was Withinbury, corruptly pronounced Winbury; that she was in love with Pope, and would have married him; that her guardian, though she was deformed in her person, looking upon such a match as beneath her, sent her to a convent, and that a noose, and not a sword, put an end to her life. H.

The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, can be found: the poet however faithfully attends us; we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail without better matter?

The last stanza recurs again to common-places. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault; the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts: Pope, with all this labour in the praise of Musick, was ignorant of its principles, and insensible of its effects.

One of his greatest though of his earliest works, is the "Essay on Criti-"cism," which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first criticks and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactick composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it; he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the Essay would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to observe, that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is perhaps the best that English poetry can shew. A similie, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity: but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. In didactick poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praised which illustrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroicks, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which, having no parallels, served only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called "comparisons with a long tail." In their similies the greatest writers have sometimes failed; the ship-race, compared with the chariot-race, is neither illustrated nor aggrandised; land and water make all the difference: when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of pursuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer; and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage by a hare and dog. The simile of the

Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension, and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewise dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph, in which it is directed that the "sound should seem an echo to the sense;" a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this representation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *thump*, *rattle*, *growl*, *hiss*. These however are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was in the dactylyck measures of the learned languages capable of considerable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were perhaps expressed by verses rapid or slow, without much attention of the writer, when the image had full possession of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion however, may be in some sort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of their most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus:

> With many a weary step, and many a groan,
> Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
> The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down, and smoaks along the ground.

Who does not perceive the stone to move slowly upward, and roll violently back? But set the same numbers to another sense.

> While many a merry tale, and many a song,
> Chear'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long.
> The rough road then, returning in a round,
> Mock'd our impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.

We have now surely lost much of the delay, and much of the rapidity.

But, to shew how little the greatest master of numbers can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be sufficient to remark that the poet who tells us, that

When

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow:
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main;

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praise of Camilla's lightness of foot, he tried another experiment upon *sound* and *time*, and produced this memorable triplet:

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestick march, and energy divine.

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race, and the march of slow-paced majesty, exhibited by the same poet in the same sequence of syllables, except that the exact prosodist will find the line of *swiftness* by one time longer than that of *tardiness*.

Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when real are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to be solicited.

To the praises which have been accumulated on "The Rape of the Lock" by readers of every class, from the critick to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now enquired from what sources the power of pleasing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana The employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own absurdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions: when the phantom is put in motion, it dissolves; thus *Discord* may raise a mutiny; but *Discord* cannot conduct a march, nor besiege a town. Pope brought in view a new race of Beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The Sylphs and Gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table, what more terrifick and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean, or the field of battle; they give their proper help, and do their proper mischief.

Pope is said, by an objector, not to have been the inventor of this petty nation; a charge which might with more justice have been brought against the author of the "Iliad," who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

In

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a Sylph, and detests a Gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life, nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded; yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us, invested with so much art of decoration, that, though nothing is disguised, every thing is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.

The purpose of the poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at "the little unguarded "follies of the female sex." It is therefore without justice that Dennis charges the "Rape of the Lock" with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the "Lutrin," which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but, if they had both succeeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from publick gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single cruffh of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous; that, by all the buftle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither haftened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The Sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose; and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewise be charged with want of connection; the game at *ombre* might be spared, but if the Lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those perhaps are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence!

The Epiftle of "Eloise to Abelard" is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloise were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth.

ruth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection; for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supersedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without straggling into scenes of fable.

The story, thus skilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him, which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revisal. Here is particularly observable the *curiosa felicitas*, a fruitful soil, and careful cultivation. Here is no crudeness of sense, nor asperity of language.

The sources from which sentiments, which have so much vigour and efficacy have been drawn, are shewn to be the mystick writers by the learned author of the "Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope;" a book which teaches how the brow of Criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the "Iliad;" a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks translation was almost unknown; t was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourse to the Barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless perhaps Anguilara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The "Iliad" of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantick; and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject it with disgust.

Their predecessors the Romans have left some specimens of translation behind them, and that employment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the wisdom of the ancients; but found themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author, could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer; and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope searched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art, that he has left in his "Homer" a treasure of poetical elegance to posterity. His version may be said to have

have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately corrected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the publick ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by some, who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homerical; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristick manner of the Father of Poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty*. This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that *necessitas quod cogit defendit*; that may be lawfully done which cannot be forborn. Time and place will always enforce regard. In estimating this translation, consideration must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabrick with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by 18 hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed passages, very few can be shewn which he has not embellished.

There is a time when nations emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leisure to grow wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowlege finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, in the progress of learning, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another; and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English "Iliad," when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtless owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is

* Bentley was one of these. He and Pope, soon after the publication of Homer, met at Dr. Mead's at dinner; when Pope, desirous of his opinion of the translation, addressed him thus "Dr. Bentley, I ordered my bookseller to send you your books; I hope you received them." Bentley, who had purposely avoided saying any thing about Homer, pretended not to understand him, and asked, "Books! books! what books?" 'My Homer,' replied Pope,' 'which 'you did me the honour to subscribe for.'—'Oh,' said Bentley, 'ay now I recollect—your trans-'lation:—it is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope; but you must not call it Homer.' H.

is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expence of dignity. A hero would wish to be loved, as well as to be reverenced.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation; he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, those of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has however been objected, with sufficient reason, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety that too many appeals are made to the Ladies, and the ease which is so carefully preserved is sometimes the ease of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style; the gravity of common criticks may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the "Odyssey" nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured not unsuccessfully to imitate his master.

Of the "Dunciad" the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's "Mac Fleknoe;" but the plan is so enlarged and diversified as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous.

That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his "Shakspeare," and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and therefore it was necessary to find other enemies with other names, at whose expence he might divert the publick.

In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of Criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or deformity are not culpable in themselves, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprehension, what should restrain them? *impune diem consumpserit ingens Telephus;* and upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam.

In one, the most valuable passage is perhaps the Elogy on "Good Sense," and the other, the "End of the Duke of Buckingham."

The Epistle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called the "Prologue to the "Satires," is a performance consisting, as it seems, of many fragments wrought into one design, which by this union of scattered beauties contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than self-defence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity, than the poets vindication of his own character. The meanest passage is the satire upon Sporus.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called the "Epilogue to the Satires," it was very justly remarked by Savage that the second was in the whole more strongly conceived, and more equally supported, but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of Vice, and the celebration of the triumph of Corruption.

The Imitations of Horace seem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the sentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what is easy is seldom excellent; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers; the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcileable dissimilitude, and the works will be generally uncouth and party coloured; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern*.

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had Invention, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in the "Rape of the Lock;" and by which extrinsick and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the "Essay on Criticism." He had Imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader, the various forms of nature, incidents of life and energies of passion, as in his "Eloisa," "Windsor forest," and the "Ethick "Epistles."

* In one of these poems is a couplet, to which belongs a story that I once heard the reverend Dr Ridley relate.

'Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage;
Hard words, or hanging if your judge be****.'

Sir Francis Page, a judge well known in his time, conceiving that his name was meant to fill up the blank, sent his clerk to Mr. Pope, to complain of the insult. Pope told the young man, that the blank might be supplied by many monosyllables, other than the judge's name:—but, sir, said the clerk, 'the judge says that no other word will make sense of the passage.'—'So then it 'seems,' says Pope, 'your master is not only a judge, but a poet: as that is the case, the odds 'are against me. Give my respects to the judge, and tell him, I will not contend with one that 'has the advantage of me, and he may fill up the blank as he pleases.' H.

"Epistles." He had Judgment, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning; "Musick," says Dryden, "is inarticulate poetry;" among the excellences of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovers the most perfect fabrick of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best: in consequence of which restraint, his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception; and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have thought with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical; with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined he contented himself, without regard to Swift's remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission at a small distance to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of Alexandrines and Triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes, and always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in the "Rape of the Lock."

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the "Iliad" might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had perhaps infected him.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this;

> Lo, where Mœtis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It

It is remarked by Watts, that there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful; and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shewn him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

New sentiments and new images others may produce; but to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet; otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him: if the writer of the "Iliad" were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of Genius.

The following Letter, of which the original is in the hands of Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr. Jodrell.

"To Mr. BRIDGES, at the Bishop of London's at Fulham.

"SIR,

"The favour of your Letter, with your Remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the speed with which you discharged so troublesome a task, doubles the obligation.

"I must own, you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed upon me; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your censure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribbler to be improved in his judgment than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations, from the Greek which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes; who are, it seems, as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decryed for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have restored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of all former explainers, in several hundred places: and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin, attributed so much to Hobbes, that they

hey confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, over-ruled me. However, Sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion: (for men (let them say what they will) never approve any other's sense, but as it squares with their own.) But you have made me much more proud of, and positive in my judgment, since it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and shall make my profit of them; to give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden's example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience from one, who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty criticks or commentators. But though I speak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of Invention and Design, which are not at all confined to the language: for the distinguishing excellences of Homer are (by the consent of the best criticks of all nations) first in the manners, (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words:) and then in that rapture and fire, which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force, that no man who has a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads him. Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at once, whereas Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought principally to imitate; and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason why all translations fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to, renders them heavy and dispirited.

"The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, consists in that noble simplicity which runs through all his works; (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is at the same time very copious). I don't know how I have run into this pedantry in a Letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately; what farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet; which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity of proving how much I think myself obliged to your friendship, and how truly I am, Sir,

Your most faithful, humble servant,

A. POPE."

The

The Criticism upon Pope's Epitaphs, which was printed in "The Universal Visitor," is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inserted in the Life.

EVERY Art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall therefore endeavour, at this *visit*, to entertain the young students in poetry, with an examination of Pope's Epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is useless; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be composed in verse or prose. It is indeed commonly panegyric; because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends; but it has no rule to restrain or molify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

I.

*On* CHARLES *Earl of* DORSET, *in the Church of Wythyham in Sussex.*

Dorset, the grace of courts, the Muse's pride,
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dy'd.
The scourge of pride, though sanctify'd or great,
Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state;
Yet soft in nature, though severe his lay,
His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.
Blest satyrist! who touch'd the mean so true,
As show'd, Vice had his hate and pity too.
Blest courtier! who could king and country please,
Yet sacred kept his friendship, and his ease.
Blest peer! his great forefather's every grace
Reflecting, and reflected on his race;
Where other Buckhursts, other Dorsets shine,
And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man for whom the tomb was erected, *died*. There are indeed some qualities worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by "judge of nature" is not easy to say. Nature is not the object of human judgment: for it is in vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant, what is commonly called *nature* by the criticks, a just representation of things really existing, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed to *art*; nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of *art*.

The

The scourge of pride——

Of this couplet, the second line is not, what is intended, an illustration of the former. *Pride*, in the *Great*, is indeed well enough connected with knaves in state, though *knaves* is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of *sanctified* pride will not lead the thoughts to *fops in learning*, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

Yet soft his nature——

This is a high compliment, but was not first bestowed on Dorset by Pope. The next verse is extremely beautiful.

Blest satyrist!——

In this distich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame these imitations with much harshness; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided, and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own; and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses his proper feather.

Blest courtier!——

Whether a courtier can properly be commended for keeping his *ease sacred*, may perhaps be disputable. To please king and country, without sacrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would attend a little more accurately to the use of the word *sacred*, which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher Being, or where some duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendship sacred, because promises of friendship are very awful ties; but methinks he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease *sacred*.

Blest peer!——

The blessing ascribed to the *peer* has no connection with his peerage: they might happen to any other man, whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity were likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer or the man entombed.

II.

*On Sir* WILLIAM TRUMBAL, *one of the principal Secretaries of State to King* WILLIAM III. *who having resigned his place, died in his retirement at East-hamstead in Berkshire*, 1716.

A pleasing form, a firm, yet cautious mind,
Sincere, though prudent; constant, yet resign'd;
Honour unchang'd, a principle profest,
Fix'd to one side, but moderate to the rest:
An honest courtier, yet a patriot too,
Just to his prince, and to his country true.
Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
A generous faith, from superstition free;
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny:
Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,
At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the first view, a fault which I think scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead; and to what purpose is any thing told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a history of a nameless hero, are equally absurd, since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either are scattered at the mercy of fortune to be appropriated by guess. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them, and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject. He said perhaps the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an *honest courtier* and a *patriot*; for an *honest courtier* cannot but be a *patriot*.

It was unsuitable to the nicety required in short compositions, to close his verse with the word *too*; every rhyme should be a word of emphasis, nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excuseable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the seventh line the word *filled* is weak and prosaic, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

The thought in the last line is impertinent, having no connection with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conspirator* who died lately in prison, after

* Major Bernardi; who died in Newgate, Sept 20, 1756. See Gent Mag. vol. L. p. 125.

a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved ıst him, the sentiment had been just and pathetical; but why should nbal be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known re- ıt?

III.

*he Hon.* SIMON HARCOURT, *only Son of the Lord Chancellor* HARCOURT, *at the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordshire*, 1720.

To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near,
Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear:
Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
Or gave his father grief but when he dy'd.
How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!
If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.
Oh, let thy once-lov'd friend inscribe thy stone,
And with a father's sorrows mix his own!

ıis epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the :, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must con- vith genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot ıpied but with servile imitation.

:annot but wish that, of this inscription, the two last lines had been :ed, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the :.

IV.

*On* JAMES CRAGGS, *Esq; in Westminster-Abbey.*

JACOBUS CRAGGS,
REGI MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ A SECRETIS
ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS
PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPULI AMOR ET DELICIÆ:
VIXIT TITULIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR,
ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV.
OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear:
Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend;
Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd.
Prais'd, wept, and honour'd, by the Muse he lov'd.

ıe lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and fore some faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are from the poems that first contained them. We may however, observe defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet: it is fluous to tell of him, who was *sincere*, *true*, and *faithful*, that he was *nour clear*.

There seems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the relation between the two positions, that *he gained no title* and *lost no friend?*

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be used; for no reason can be given why part of the information should be given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb, more than in any other place, on any other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs

V.

*Intended for Mr.* ROWE. *In Westminster-Abbey.*

Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
And, sacred, place by Dryden's awful dust:
Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,
To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.
Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest!
Blest in thy genius, in thy love too blest!
One grateful woman to thy fame supplies
What a whole thankless land to his denies.

Of this inscription the chief fault is, that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it was written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him, and indeed gives very little information concerning either.

To wish, *Peace to thy shade*, is too mythological to be admitted into a Christian temple: the ancient worship has infected almost all our other compositions, and might therefore be contented to spare our epithets. Let fiction, at least, cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

VI.

*On Mrs.* CORBET, *who died of a Cancer in her Breast.*[*]

Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense:
No conquest she, but o'er herself desir'd;
No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,
Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures try'd;
The saint sustain'd it, but the woman dy'd.

[*] In the North aile of the parish church of St. Margaret, Westminster. H.

ave always considered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs; ıbject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent iarities; yet that which really makes, though not the splendor, the y of life, and that which every wise man will choose for his final and g companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he ts weary and disgusted from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain ch a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay despise, it was fit he value should be made known, and the dignity established. Domestick :, as it is exerted without great occasions, or conspicuous consequences even unnoted tenor, required the genius of Pope to display it in such nner as might attract regard, and enforce reverence. Who can forbear ment that this amiable woman has no name in the verses.

the particular lines of this inscription be examined, it will appear less y than the rest. There is scarce one line taken from common places, ss it be that in which *only Virtue* is said to be *our own*. I once heard a r of great beauty and excellence object to the fourth line, that it con- d an unnatural and incredible panegyrick. Of this let the Ladies Judge.

## VII.

*he Monument of the Hon.* ROBERT DIGBY, *and of his Sister* MARY, *ected by their Father the Lord* DIGBY, *in the Church of Sherborne Dorsetshire*, 1727.

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth:
Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,
Good without noise, without pretension great.
Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,
Who knew no wish but what the world might hear:
Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:
Go, live! for heaven's eternal year is thine,
Go, and exalt thy mortal to divine.

And thou, blest maid! attendant on his doom,
Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,
Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,
Not parted long, and now to part no more!
Go, then, where only bliss sincere is known!
Go, where to love and to enjoy are one!

Yet take these tears, Mortality's relief.
And till we share your joys, forgive our grief:
These little rites, a stone, a verse receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

This

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indiscriminate character, and of the sister tells nothing but that she died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer; for the greater part of mankind *have no character at all*, have little that distinguishes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be said of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thousand more. It is indeed no great panegyrick, that there is inclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year, and died in another; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent, which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are however not the proper subjects of poetry; and whenever friendship; or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The scantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs, which he has written, comprise about an hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought, or word, which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed from Dryden. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

## VIII.

*On Sir* GODFREY KNELLER. *In Westminster-Abbey*, 1723.

Kneller, by heaven, and not a master taught,
Whose art was nature, and whose pictures thought;
Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate
Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great,
Lies crown'd with Princes honours, Poets lays,
Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise.

Living great Nature feared he might outvie
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die.

Of this epitaph the first couplet is good, the second not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word *crowned* not being applicable to the *honours* or the *lays*, and the fourth is not only borrowed from the epitaph on Raphael, but of a very harsh construction.

## IX.

*On General* HENRY WITHERS. *In Westminster Abbey*, 1729.

Here, Withers, rest! thou bravest, gentlest mind,
Thy country's friend, but more of human kind.
O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd!
O! soft humanity in age belov'd!
For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear,
And the gay courtier feels the sigh sincere.

Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove
Thy martial spirit, or thy social love!
Amidst corruption, luxury, and rage,
Still leave some ancient virtues to our age:
Nor let us say (those English glories gone)
The last true Briton lies beneath this stone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of common places, ough somewhat diversified, by mingled qualities, and the peculiarity of a ofession.

The second couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleasing; exclamation dom succeeds in our language; and, I think, it may be observed that the rticle O! used at the beginning of a sentence, always offends.

The third couplet is more happy; the value expressed for him, by different ts of men, raises him to esteem; there is yet something of the common nt of superficial satirists, who suppose that the insincerity of a courtier stroys all his sensations, and that he is equally a dissembler to the living d the dead.

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should unwilling to lose the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if ey cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

## X.

*On Mr.* ELIJAH FENTON. *At Easthamstead in Berkshire*, 1730.

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, Here lies an honest man:
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,
Whom Heaven kept sacred from the Proud and Great:
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life; and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;
From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfy'd,
Thank'd heaven that he liv'd, and that he dy'd.

The

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed from Crashaw. The four next lines contain a species of praise peculiar, original, and just. Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part contain nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and, whatever criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

## XI.

*On Mr. GAY. In Westminster-Abbey.* 1732.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humour tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation, in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the Great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the Worthy and the Good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies GAY.

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more successfully executed than the rest, for it will not always happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other; *gentle manners* and *mild affections*, if they mean any thing, must mean the same.

That Gay was a *man in wit* is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The *wit of man*, and the *simplicity of a child*, make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral

In the next couplet *rage* is less properly introduced after the mention of *mildness* and *gentleness*, which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so *mild* and *gentle* to *temper* his *rage*, was not difficult.

The next line is inharmonious in its sound, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious, and the word *lash* used absolutely, and without any modification, is gross and improper.

To

To be *above temptation* in poverty and *free from corruption among the Great* is indeed such a peculiarity as deserved notice. But to be a *safe companion* is a praise merely negative, arising not from possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and that one of the most odious.

As little can be added to his character, by asserting that he was *lamented in his end*. Every man that dies is, at least by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented, and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The first eight lines have no grammar; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the *worthy* and the *good*, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh, when it is explained, that still fewer approve.

## XII.

*Intended for Sir* ISAAC NEWTON. *In Westminster-Abbey.*

ISAACUS NEWTONIUS:
Quem Immortalem
Testantur, *Tempus, Natura, Cœlum:*
Mortalem
Hoc marmor fatetur.

Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night:
God said, *Let Newton be!* And all was light.

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults seem not to be very few. Why part should be Latin, and part English, it is not easy to discover. In the Latin the opposition of *Immortalis* and *Mortalis*, is a mere sound, or a mere quibble; he is not *immortal* in any sense contrary to that in which he is *mortal*.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

## XIII.

*On* EDMUND, *Duke of* BUCKINGHAM, *who died in the 19th Year of his Age*, 1735.

If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
And every opening virtue blooming round,
Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,
Or add one patriot to a sinking state;
This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,
Or sadly told how many hopes lie here!
The living virtue now had shone approv'd,
The senate heard him, and his country lov'd.
Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame,
Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham:

In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art,
Ends in the milder merit of the heart:
And, chiefs or sages long to Britain given,
Pays the last tribute of a saint to heaven.

This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the rest, but I know not for what reason. To *crown* with *reflection* is surely a mode of speech approaching to nonsense. *Opening virtues blooming round*, is something like tautology; the six following lines are poor and prosaick. *Art* is in another couplet used for *arts*, that a rhyme may be had to *heart*. The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deserve the notice of criticism. The contemptible "Dialogue" betweeen HE and SHE should have been suppressed for the author's sake.

In his last epitaph on himself, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he confounds the living man with the dead:

Under this stone, or under this sill,
Or under this turf, &c.

When a man is once buried, the question, under what he is buried, is easily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new; even this wretchedness seems to have been borrowed from the following tuneless lines:

Ludovici Areosti humantur ossa
Sub hoc marmore, vel sub hac humo, seu
Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres
Sive hærede benignior comes, seu
Opportunius incidens Viator:
Nam scire haud potuit futura, sed nec
Tanti erat vacuum sibi cadaver
Ut utnam cuperet parare vivens,
Vivens ista tamen sibi paravit.
Quæ inscribi voluit suo sepulchro
Olim siquod haberetis sepulchrum.

Surely Ariosto did not venture to expect that his trifle would have ever had such an illustrious imitator.

# P I T T.

STOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I shall relate more than his
already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. War-
born in 1699 at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed.
is, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he
nguished by exercises of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal
College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his
nd voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which
ot then know to have been translated by Rowe.
s an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded.
pression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circum-
is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with
ous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superflu-
l from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.
he had resided at his College three years, he was presented to the
of Pinpern in Dorsetshire (1722), by his relation Mr. Pitt of Strat-
in Hampshire; and, resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford
s longer, till he became Master of Arts (1724).
obably about this time translated "Vida's Art of Poetry," which
's splendid edition had then made popular. In this translation he
ished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adap-
its numbers, to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has
at ardour enforced and exemplified.
en retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and
likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he passed the rest
e, reverenced for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his tem-
the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of
lar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar, he was in
igh degree chearful and entertaining. His general benevolence pro-
neral respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither
t for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his miscellany, published in 1727, it is not easy nor necessary to know: those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his Vida animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the Eneid. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or four more; with an advertisement, in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which himself was hardly conscious. This can hardly be true, and, if true, is nothing to the reader.

At last, without any further contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete English Eneid, which I am sorry not to see joined in this publication with his other poems*. It would have been pleasing to have an opportunity of comparing the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author.

Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally observed his failures, and avoided them; and, as he wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, aquable, and splendid versification. With these advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errors. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and listless perusal; that Pitt pleases the criticks, and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford, on which is this inscription:

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M. A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the universal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
simplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved,
Apr. 13, 1748,
aged 48.

* It is added to the present edition. E.

# THOMSON

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume, inherited as co-heiress a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of "Autumn," but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which however he so little pleased himself, that on every new-year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From the school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raised upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The design of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at Edinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till, at the usual time, he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr. Hamilton the professor of Divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience; and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his blossoms of poetry,

poetry, which, however, were in some danger of a blast; for submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he heard of nothing but faults; but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to sink into despondence.

He easily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; however, he justified his adventure by her encouragement; and came to seek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities, his whole fund was his "Winter," which for a time could find no purchaser; till, at last, Mr. Millan was persuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for some time reason to regret: but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation

"Winter," was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill.

"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with Sir "Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to "him concerning me: his answer was, that I had never come near him. "Then the gentleman put the question, If he desired that I should wait on "him? he returned, he did. On this the gentleman gave me an introduc"tory Letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil "manner; asked me some common-place questions; and made me a pre"sent of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own that the present was "larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his genero"sity or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

The

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the publick; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the Lord chancellor Talbot.

"Winter" was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then Malloch), and Mira, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to "Winter" and the other Seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the collected works, the reader may enquire.

The next year (1727) he distinguished himself by three publications; of "Summer," in pursuance of his plan; of "A Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton," which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr. Gray; and of "Britannia," a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomson, having been some time entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his "Summer;" but the same kindness which had first disposed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuse the dedication, which was by his advice addressed to Mr. Dodington, a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

"Spring" was published next year, with a dedication to the countess of Hertford; whose practice it was to invite every summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses and assist her studies. This honour was one summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with lord Hertford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.

"Autumn," the season to which the "Spring" and "Summer" are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of "Sophonisba" which raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the publick. It was observed, however, that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is a feeblee line in the play:

O Sophonisba,

O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!

This gave occasion to a waggish parody:

O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to "Sophonisba," the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it; and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expence; and might expect when he returned home a certain establishment.

At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts upon Liberty.

While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of secretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. Liberty called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises, and reward her encomiast: her praises were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust; none of Thomson's performances were so little regarded.

The judgement of the publick was not erroneous; the recurrence of the same images must tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning superfluous, must quickly grow disgusting.

The poem of "Liberty" does not now appear in its original state; but, when the author's works were collected after his death, was shortened by Sir George Lyttleton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend. —I wish to see it exhibited as its author left it.

Thomson

Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and though the lord Hardwicke delayed for some time to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness, or pride, or some other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from soliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttleton professed himself the patron of wit; to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said that they were in a "more poetical posture than formerly;" and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of Agamemnon, which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery, he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to silence. Pope countenanced "Agamemnon," by coming to it the first night, and was welcomed to the theatre by a general clap; he had much regard for Thomson, and once expressed it in a poetical Epistle sent to Italy, of which however he abated the value by transplanting some of the lines into his Epistle to "Arbuthnot."

About this time the Act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of "Gustavus Vasa," a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the publick recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the refusal of "Edward and Eleonora," offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson likewise endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the publick murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that "he had taken a *Liberty* which "was not agreeable to *Britannia* in any *Season*."

He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the masque of "Alfred," which was acted before the Prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work (1745) was "Tancred and Sigismunda," the most successful of all his tragedies; for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. It may be doubted whether he was, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the

pathetick; and his diffusive and descriptive style produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttleton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the "Castle of Indolence," which was many years under his hand, but was at last finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inscription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster-abbey.

Thomson was of stature above the middle size, and, "more fat than bard beseems," of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but chearful among select friends and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of "Coriolanus," which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttleton, brought upon the stage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a Prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond intimacy, spoke in such a manner as shewed him "to be," on that occasion, "no actor." The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest, by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a considerable sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his sisters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by the following Letter, which I communicate with much pleasure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, and reflecting on the friendly assistance of Mr. Boswell, from whom I received it.

"Hagley in Worcestershire,

"My dear Sister, "October the 4th, 1747.

"I thought you had known me better than to interpret my silence into a "decay of affection, especially as your behaviour has always been such as "rather to increase than diminish it. Don't imagine, because I am a bad "correspondent, that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother. I "must do myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are naturally "very fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of complaint against "you (of which by the bye I have not the least shadow), I am conscious of "so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little charitable and "forgiving.

"It

"It gives me the truest heart-felt satisfaction to hear you have a good "kind husband, and are in easy contented circumstances; but were they "otherwise, that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness towards "you. As our good and tender hearted parents did not live to receive any "material testimonies of that highest human gratitude I owed them (than "which nothing could have given me equal pleasure), the only return I "can make them now is by kindness to those they left behind them. Would "to God poor Lizy had lived longer; to have been a farther witness of the "truth of what I say, and that I might have had the pleasure of seeing once "more a sister who so truly deserved my esteem and love! But she is hap-"py, while we must toil a little longer here below: let us however do it "chearfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet "again on a safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of "life will not perhaps be inconsistent with that blissful state. You did right "to call your daughter by her name; for you must needs have had a par-"ticular tender friendship for one another, endeared as you were by nature "by having passed the affectionate years of your youth together; and by "that great softner and engager of hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in "my power to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquisite pleasures "of my life.—But enough of this melancholy, though not unpleasing strain.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as "you will see by my Letter to him: as I approve entirely of his marrying "again, you may readily ask me why I don't marry at all. My circumstances "have hitherto been so variable and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as "induce to keep me from engaging in such a state: and now, though they "are more settled, and of late (which you will be glad to hear) considerably "improved, I begin to think myself too far advanced in life for such youth-"ful undertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons that are apt "to startle the delicacy of difficult old batchelors. I am, however, not a "little suspicious that, was I to pay a visit to Scotland (which I have some "thought of doing soon), I might possibly be tempted to think of a thing "not easily repaired if done amiss. I have always been of opinion that "none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more "forsaken than they, while the gentlemen are continually running abroad "all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return "for a wife. You see I am beginning to make interest already with the "Scots ladies.—But no more of this infectious subject.—Pray let me "hear from you now and then; and though I am not a regular corres-"pondent, yet perhaps I may mend in that respect. Remember me kindly "to your husband, and believe me to be,

"Your most affectionate brother,

"JAMES THOMSON."

(Addressed) "To Mrs. Thomson in Lanark."

# WATTS.

THE Poems of Dr. WATTS were by my recommendation inserted in this Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the same name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a shoemaker. He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, master of the free-school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution of taking his lot with the Dissenters. Such he was as every Christian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Horte, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin Essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from fifteen to fifty, and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the *glyconick* measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect

neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour, as shews that he was but at a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them; and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature, and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartopp five years as domestick tutor to his son; and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and being chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the first time on the birth-day that completed his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of a second nativity, by which he entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncey; but, soon after his entrance on his charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually; and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that from the feebleness which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons's representation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.

"Our next observation shall be made upon that remarkably kind Provi-
"dence which brought the Doctor into Sir Thomas Abney's family, and
"continued him there till his death, a period of no less than thirty-six
"years. In the midst of his sacred labours for the glory of God, and good

"of

" of his generation, he is seized with a most violent and threatening fever, " which leaves him oppressed with great weakness, and puts a stop at least " to his publick services for four years. In this distressing season, doubly " so to his active and pious spirit, he is invited to Sir Thomas Abney's fa- " mily, nor ever removes from it till he had finished his days. Here he " enjoyed the uninterrupted demonstrations of the truest friendship. Here, " without any care of his own, he had every thing which could contribute " to the enjoyment of life, and favour the unweared pursuits of his studies. " Here he dwelt in a family, which for piety, order, harmony, and every " virtue, was an house of God. Here he had the privilege of a country " recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and " other advantages, to sooth his mind and aid his restoration to health; to " yield him, whenever he chose them, most grateful intervals from his la- " borious studies, and enable him to return to them with redoubled vigour " and delight. Had it not been for this most happy event, he might, as to " outward view, have feebly, it may be painfully, dragged on through many " more years of languor, and inability for public service, and even for pro- " fitable study, or perhaps might have sunk into his grave under the over- " whelming load of infirmities in the midst of his days; and thus the church " and world would have been deprived of those many excellent sermons and " works, which he drew up and published during his long residence in this " family. In a few years after his coming hither, Sir Thomas Abney dies; " but his amiable consort survives, who shews the Doctor the same respect " and friendship as before, and most happily for him and great numbers be- " sides; for, as her riches were great, her generosity and munificence were " in full proportion; her thread of life was drawn out to great age, even " beyond that of the Doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through her " kindness, and that of her daughter, the present Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, " who in a like degree esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the bene- " nefits and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into this family, " till his days were numbered and finished, and, like a shock of corn in its " season, he descended into the regions of perfect and immortal life and " joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six-and-thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, shew the intenseness of his industry, and the extent of his capacity.

He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style. He shewed them, that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.

He

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his cursory sermons, but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause for the proper impression.

To stated and publick instruction he added familiar visits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of resentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tenderness appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue, though the whole was not a hundred a year; and for children, he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer, who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire his meekness of opposition, and his mildness of censure. It was not only in his book, but in his mind that *orthodoxy* was *united* with *charity*.

Of his philosophical pieces, his Logick has been received into the universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man, who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate its system, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *space* with that of *empty space*, and did not consider that though space might be without matter, yet matter being extended could not be without space.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his "Improvement of the Mind," of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's "Conduct of the Understanding," but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatises of Theology as distinct from his other productions, but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works: under his direction it may be truly said, *Theologiæ Philosophia ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason, is on a sudden compelled to pray.

It was, therefore, with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unsolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example; till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the 75th year of his age.

Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the Art of Reasoning, and the Science of the Stars.

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments, rather than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination

gination, as the "Dacian Battle" proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to be supplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topicks enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse: the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously; pure but who is there that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of sprightliness and vigour? He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses, or his prose, to imitate him in all but his nonconformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

# A. PHILIPS.

OF the birth or early part of the life of AMBROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge, where he first solicited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the collection published by the University on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what station he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have published his pastorals before the year 1708, because they are evidently prior to those of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addressed to the universal patron, the Duke of Dorset, a "poetical Letter from Copenhagen," which was published in the "Tatler," and is by Pope in one of his first letters mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man "who could write very nobly."

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; since he was reduced to translate the "Persian Tales" for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean sound.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's "Life of Archbishop Williams." The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or vigour.

In 1712 he brought upon the stage "The Distrest Mother," almost a translation of Racine's "Andromaque." Such a work requires no uncommon powers, but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play, a whole "Spectator," none indeed of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it yet continued to be acted, another

"Spectator"

"Spectator" was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience, says Pope*, was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the most successful Epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of Epilogues in general, and consequently of this was questioned by a correspondent of the "Spectator," whose Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered in the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to "Phædra" had a little excited jealousy; and something of Prior's plan may be discovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this distinguished Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate* "the man who calls me cousin;" and when he was asked how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, "The Epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first." It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it, and that, when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the solicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his translations from Sappho had been published in the "Spectator;" he was an important and distinguished associate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice from the publick was his Six Pastorals, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as a pleasing amusement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The rustic poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose Eclogues seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was soon discovered that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for

* Spence.

images and descriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety of matter, which having a natural power to sooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *Eclogue* of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *Æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers, and amongst others by our Spenser.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan published his Bucolicks with such success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far, and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferior schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, to censure the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topicks of controversy.

The Italians soon transferred Pastoral Poetry into their own language; Sannazaro wrote "Arcadia" in prose and verse; Tasso and Guarini wrote "Favole Boschareccie," or Sylvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with *Thrysis* and *Damon*, and *Thestilys* and *Phyllis*.

Philips thinks it "somewhat strange to conceive how, in an age so addicted to the Muses, Pastoral Poetry never comes to be so much as thought upon." His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never, from the time of Spenser, wanted writers to talk occasionally of *Arcadia* and *Strephon*; and half the book, in which he first tried his powers, consists of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between *Tityrus* and *Corydon*, or *Mopsus* and *Menalcas*. A series or book of Pastorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not long afterwards Pope made the first display of his powers in four Pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The "Guardian" gave an account of Pastoral, partly critical, and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the modern is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry; and the pipe of the

pastoral

ral muse is transmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Vir-
rom Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

th this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted;
erefore drew a comparison of Philip's performance with his own, in
n, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he
imself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The
n of aggrandizing himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, tho'
son discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing
by publishing his paper. Published however it was ("Guard. 40.")
rom that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of
violence.

poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion be-
n the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit,
d to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought,
Addison's approbation, as disaffected to the government.

en with this he was not satisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance
any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to grosser insults,
hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chastise Pope,
appears to have been extremely exasperated; for in the first edition of
etters he calls Philips "rascal," and in the last still charges him with
ning in his hands the subscriptions for Homer delivered to him by the
over Club.

suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money;
nly delayed, and with sufficient meanness, the gratification of him by
e prosperity he was pained.

en sometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridicu-
without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who
rated him with honorary garlands, which the first breath of contradic-
blasted.

hen upon the succession of the House of Hanover every Whig expected
happy, Philips seems to have obtained too little notice; he caught few
s of the golden shower, though he did not omit what flattery could per-
. He was only made a Commissioner of the Lottery, (1717), and,
did not much elevate his character, a Justice of the Peace.

he success of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes
ards the stage: he did not however soon commit himself to the mercy of
udience, but contented himself with the fame already acquired, till after
years he produced (1722) "The Briton," a tragedy which, whatever
its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, between
oc the British Prince and Valens the Roman General, is confessed to
written with great dramatick skill, animated by spirit truly poetical.

e had not been idle though he had been silent; for he exhibited another
edy the same year, on the story of "Humphry Duke of Gloucester."
s tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His

His happiest undertaking was of a paper, called "The Freethinker," in conjunction with associates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made first bishop of Bristol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may easily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal essays; but he knew how to practise the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclesiastical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be slenderly supported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and, making him his secretary, added such preferments, as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish Parliament.

In December, 1726, he was made secretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in August, 1733, became judge of the Prerogative Court.

After the death of his patron he continued some years in Ireland; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtless survived most of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagonist Pope. He found however the duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was struck with a palsy, and died June 18, 1749, in his seventy-eighth year.

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at table, when "I asked him, How came thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say 'I'm "goaded on by love?' After which question he never spoke again."

Of the "Distrest Mother" not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no subject of criticism: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems comprised in the present collection, the "Letter from Denmark" may be justly praised; the Pastorals which by the writer of the "Guardian" were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustick Muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which did not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected: the supposition of such a state is allowed to Pastoral. In his other

other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines sometimes elegant; but he has seldom much force, or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the "steerer of the realm," to Miss Pulteney in the nursery. The numbers are smooth and sprightly, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet, if they had been written by Addison, they would have had admirers; little things are not valued but when they are done by those who cannot do greater.

In his translations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least half his book deserves to be read: perhaps he valued most himself that part which the critic would reject.

# WEST.

GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a sufficient account; the intelligence which my enquiries have obtained is general and scanty.

He was the son of the reverend Dr. West; perhaps him who published "Pindar" at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was sister to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham. His father, purposing to educate him for the Church, sent him first to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was seduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commission in a troop of horse procured him by his uncle.

He continued some time in the army; though it is reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere soldier, nor ever lost the love or much neglected the pursuit of learning; and afterwards, finding himself more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk-extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit; for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession, and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and settled himself in a very pleasant house at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself to learning, and to piety. Of his learning the present Collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller, if the dissertations which accompany his version of Pindar had not been improperly omitted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his "Observations on the Resurrection," published in 1747, for which the University of Oxford created him a Doctor of laws by diploma (March 30, 1748), and would doubtless have reached yet further had he lived to complete what he had for some time meditated, the Evidence

of

of the truth of the New Testament. Perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read the prayers of the publick liturgy every morning to his family, and that on Sunday evening he called his servants into the parlour, and read to them first a sermon and then prayers. Crashaw is now not the only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of *Poet and Saint*.

He was very often visited by Lyttleton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttleton received that conviction which produced his "Dissertation on St. Paul."

These two illustrious friends had for a while listened to the blandishments of infidelity; and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of new objections against Christianity; and as infidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a Methodist.

Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council (1752); and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed; nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after (March 26) a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors.

Of his translations I have only compared the first Olympick ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas; for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of versification. The first strophe is eminently happy; in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, "if thou, my soul, wishest "to speak of games, look not in the desert sky for a planet hotter than the "sun, nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia." He is sometimes too paraphrastical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, signifies *delighting in horses*; a word which, in the translation, generates these lines.

Hiero's royal brows, whose care
Tends the courser's noble breed,
Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.

Pindar says of Pelops, that "he came alone in the dark to the White Sea:" and West,

> Near the billow beaten side
> Of the foam-besilver'd main,
> Darkling, and alone, he stood

which however is less exuberant than the former passage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His "Institution of the Garter" (1742) is written with sufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserve the reader from weariness.

His "Imitations of Spenser" are very successfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements together. But such compositions are not to be reckoned among the great atchievements of intellect, because their effect is local and temporary; they appeal not to reason or passion, but to memory, and presuppose an accidental or artificial state of mind. An Imitation of Spenser is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenser has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation; but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at least with the whole circle of polished life; what is less than this can be only pretty, the plaything of fashion, and the amusement of a day.

THERE is in the "Adventurer" a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr. West's, and supposed to have been written by him. It should not be concealed, however, that it is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Dodsley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author, and Hawkesworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the publick.

# COLLINS.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester on the twenty-fifth day of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the publick by some verses to a "Lady weeping," published in "The Gentleman's Magazine."

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College, but unhappily there was no vacancy. He became a Commoner of Queen's College probably with a scanty maintenance; but was, in about half a year, elected a *Demy* of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Batchelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution, or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote enquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of his history was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now-and-then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition chearful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers

sellers who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He shewed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study* than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities, disease and insanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens.

"This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by him, but were not always attained. Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunaticks, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

"After his return from France, the writer of his character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man of Letters had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that "is the best."

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatick manners, and called them his Irish Eclogues. He shewed them at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr. John Hume, on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found*.

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men

are

* It is now printed in the present collection. E.

are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr Collins's first production is added here from the "Poetical Calender."

## TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy state;
You may be happy in your turn,
And seize the treasure you regret.

With Love united Hymen stands,
And softly whispers to your charms;
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
"You'll find your sister in his arms."

# D Y E R.

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own Letters, published with Hughes's correspondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer of Aberglasney, in Caermarthenshire, a soliciter of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster school under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law, but, having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied a while under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting, and about 1727 printed "Grongar Hill" in Lewis's Miscellany.

Being, probably, unsatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published the "Ruins "of Rome."

If his poem was written soon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions in painting, whatever they might be; for decline of health and love of study determined him to the church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it seems, married about the same time a lady of the name of Ensor; "whose grand-mother," says he, "was a Shakspeare, descended from "a brother of every body's Shakspeare;" by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclesiastical provision was a long time but slender. His first patron, Mr. Harper, gave him in 1741, Calthorp in Leicestershire, of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnshire, of seventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1751, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and forty

pounds a year; and in 1755 the Chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expences, took away the profit. In 1757 he published the "Fleece," his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodsley the bookseller was one day mentioning it to a critical visitor, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, "He will," said the critick, "be buried in woollen."

He did not indeed long survive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments; for in 1758 he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. "Grongar Hill" is the happiest of his productions: it is not indeed very accurately written; but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise so welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer so consonant to the general sense or experience of mankind, that when it is once read, it will be read again.

The idea of the "Ruins of Rome" strikes more, but pleases less, and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some passages however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices, he says,

> ——————The Pilgrim oft
> At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
> Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
> Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
> Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the Moon.

Of "The Fleece," which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl.* When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery, and incidental digressions, by cloathing small images in great words, and by all the writers arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed, to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbring and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told, that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the "reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's "Fleece;" for, if that were ill re- "ceived, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from "excellence."

SHENSTONE.

# SHENSTONE.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the son of Thomas Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen one of those insulated districts which, in the division of the kingdom, was appended, for some reason not now discoverable, to a distant county; and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though perhaps thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the "Schoolmistress" has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for fresh entertainment, and expected that, when any of the family went to market, a new book should be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older he went for a while to the Grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent schoolmaster at Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress.

When he was young (June 1724) he was deprived of his father, and soon after (August 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name in the book ten years, though he took no degree After the first four years he put on the civilian's gown, but without shewing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr. Dolman of Broome in Staffordshire, whose attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and in 1737 published a small Miscellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life, and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of publick resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1741 his "Judgement of Hercules," addressed to Mr. Lyttleton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election: this was next year followed by the "School-mistress."

Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty, than the increase of its produce.

Now was excited his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance; he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, and to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden; demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire: perhaps a sullen and surly speculator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed, by the most supercilious observer, to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttleton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the *petty State* that *appeared behind it*. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception;

njuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity; and where there is vanity there will be folly*.

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye; he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks, he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but could spare no money for its reparation.

In time his expences brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies†. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that if he had lived a little longer he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leasowes of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the side of his brother in the church-yard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his "Pastoral Ballad" was addressed.

He is represented by his friend Dodsley as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not easily appeased; inattentive to œconomy, and careless of his expences; in his person he was larger than the middle size, with something clumsy in his form; very negligent of his cloaths, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair

* This charge against the Lyttleton family has been denied with some degree of warmth by Mr. Potter, and since by Mr. Graves. The latter says, "The truth of the case, I believe, was, "that the Lyttleton family went so frequently with their company to the Leasowes, that they "were unwilling to break in upon Mr. Shenstone's retirement on every occasion, and therefore "often went to the principal points of view without waiting for any one to conduct them regularly through the whole walks. Of this Mr. Shenstone would sometimes peevishly complain; "though I am persuaded, he never really suspected any ill-natured intention in his worthy and "much-valued neighbours." E.

† Mr. Graves, however, expresses his belief that this is a groundless surmise. "Mr. Shenstone," "he adds, was too much respected in the neighbourhood to be treated with rudeness: and tho' "his works (frugally as they were managed) added to his manner of living, must necessarily have "made him exceed his income, and, of course, he might sometimes be distressed for money, yet "he had too much spirit to expose himself to insults from trifling sums, and guarded against any "great distress, by anticipating a few hundreds; which his estate could very well bear, as appeared by what remained to his executors after the payment of his debts, and his legacies to "his friends, and annuities of thirty pounds a year to one servant, and six pounds to another: "for his will was dictated with equal justice and generosity." E.

hair in a particular manner; for he held that the fashion was no rule of dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form*.

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime; the Elegy on Jesse, which has been supposed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Miss Godfrey in Richardson's "Pamela."

What Gray thought of his character, from the perusal of his Letters, was this:

"I have read too an octavo volume of Shenstone's Letters. Poor man! "he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and "his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and "in a place which his taste had adorned; but which he only enjoyed when "people of note came to see and commend it: his correspondence is about "nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neigh- "bouring clergymen, who wrote verses too."

His poems consist of elegies, odes and ballads, humorous sallies and moral pieces.

His conception of an Elegy he has in his Preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topicks of praise are the domestic virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the essence is uniformity will be soon described. His Elegies have therefore too much resemblance of each other.

The lines are sometimes, such as Elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant; his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill chosen, and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

The Lyrick Poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, "Rural Elegance" has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit.

Of

* "These," says Mr. Graves, "were not precisely his sentiments; though he thought right "enough, that every one should, in some degree, consult his particular shape and complexion "in adjusting his dress; and that no fashion ought to sanctify what was ungraceful, absurd, or "really deformed." E.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent; the "Skylark" pleases me best, which has however more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his "Pastoral Ballad" demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanza seems to have bsen chosen in imitation of Rowe's "Despairing Shepherd."

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature:

I priz'd every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt in my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be so,
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

In the second this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former:

I have found out a gift for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed:

For he ne'er could be true she averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

In the third he mentions the common-places of amorous poetry with some address:

'Tis his with mock passion to glow!
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold,
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold:

How

How the nightingales labour the strain,
With the notes of his charmer to vie;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs, and die.

In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural strain of Hope:

Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose.

Yet time may diminish the pain:
The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,
Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me.

His "Levities" are by their title exempted from the severities of criticism; yet it may be remarked in a few words, that his humour is sometimes gross, and seldom spritely.

Of the Moral Poems the first is the "Choice of Hercules," from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts just; but something of vigour is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His "Fate of Delicacy" has an air of gaiety, but not a very pointed and general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. "Love and honour" is derived from the old ballad, "Did you not hear of a Spanish Lady?"—I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The "School-mistress," of which I know not what claim it has to stand among the Moral Works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular style, in light and short compositions, contributes much to the increase of pleasure: we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the style, and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable.

# YOUNG.

THE following life was written, at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained: and the public will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him.

"DEAR SIR,

In consequence of our different conversations about authentic materials for the life of Young, I send you the following detail.

Of great men something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the illustrious author of the "Night Thoughts" much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June, 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time fellow of Winchester College and rector of Upham; who was the son of Jo. Young of Woodhay in Berkshire, styled by Wood *gentleman*. In September, 1682, the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. When Ward's faculties were impaired through age, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a visitation of Sprat's, July the 12th, 1686, the prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the bishop was so pleased, that he told the chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. Some time after this, in consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of Lord Bradford, to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons, he was appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says, "he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who honoured him by "standing godmother to the Poet." His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of a gentleman of the name of Harris, who married his only daughter. The dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in

We shall soon see that one of his earliest productions was more serious than what comes from the generality of unfledged poets.

Young perhaps ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the "Poem to his Majesty," presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honours on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one, at least, of the new lords, he published, in 1712, "An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne." In this composition the poet pours out his panegyrick with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the public to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by shewing that men are slain in war, and that in peace "harvests wave, and commerce swells her sail." If this be humanity, for which he meant it; is it politicks? Another purpose of this epistle appears to have been, to prepare the publick for the reception of some tragedy he might have in hand. His lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him "repent his passion for the stage;" and the particular praise bestowed on "Othello" and "Oronooko" looks as if some such character as Zanga was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison of New College, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so wonderfully some time afterwards in the "Night Thoughts," of making the public a party in his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he did not insert it in his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The booksellers, in the late body of English poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors*. This I shall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I think," says he, "the following pieces in *four* volumes to be the most excusable of all that I have written; and I wish *less apology* was needful for these. As there is no recalling what is got abroad, the pieces here republished I have revised and corrected, and rendered them as *pardonable* as it was in my power to do."

Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against literary sinners?

When Addison published "Cato" in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the "Night Thoughts" did not republish.

On the appearance of his "Poem on the Last Day," Addison did not re-

* Dr. Johnson, in many cases, thought and directed differently, particularly in Young's Works. J. N

return

return Young's compliment; but "The Englishman" of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The "Last Day" was published soon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's *imprimatur*, for it was first printed at Oxford, is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the exordium, Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards "with Britain's hero set their souls on fire," he draws, he says, a deeper scene. Marlborough *had been* considered by Britain as her *hero;* but, when the "Last Day" was published, female cabal had blasted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This serious poem was finished by Young as early as 1710, before he was thirty; for part of it is printed in the "Tatler." It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation which he formerly received from her royal indulgence.

Of this obligation nothing is now known, unless he alluded to her being his godmother. He is said indeed to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the court. In Swift's "Rhapsody on Poetry" are these lines, speaking of the court—

> Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace,
> Where Pope will never shew his face,
> Where Y—— must torture his invention
> To flatter knaves or lose his pension.

That Y——— means Young seems clear from four other lines in the same poem.

> Attend, ye Popes and Youngs and Gays,
> And tune your harps and strew your bays;
> Your panegyricks here provide;
> You cannot err on flattery's side.

Yet who shall say with certainty that Young was a pensioner? In all modern periods of this country, have not the writers on one side been regularly called Hirelings, and on the other Patriots?

Of the dedication the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace; it gives her majesty praise indeed for her victories, but says that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her; nor will he lose her there, he says, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The

"duty and respect, I happen to receive the benefit of it." That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this dedication from his works. He should have remembered, that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for *the most beautiful incident* in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

> Be this thy partial smile from censure free;
> 'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.

While Young, who, in his "Love of Fame," complains grievously how often "dedications wash an Ethiop white," was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was, perhaps, beginning to describe the "scorn and wonder of his days," in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and the duke's regard for Young, added to his "Lust of Praise," procured to All Souls College a donation, which was not forgotten by the poet when he dedicated "The Revenge."

It will surprise you to see me cite second Atkins, Case 136, Stiles *versus* the Attorney General, 14 March, 1740; as authority for the life of a poet, But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of the persons whom they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities, granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young, were for legal considerations. One was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bounty in a style princely and commendable, if not legal—"considering that the publick good is advanced by the encouragement of "learning and the polite arts, and being pleased therein with the attempts "of Dr. Young, in consideration thereof, and of the love I bear him, &c." The other was dated the 10th of July, 1722.

Young, on his examination, swore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of 100*l.* which had been offered him for his life if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the duke had given him a bond for 600*l.* dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journies, and being at great expences, in order to be chosen member of the House of Commons at the duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of 200*l.* and 400*l.* in the gift of All Souls College, on his Grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

Of

Of his adventures in the Exeter family I am unable to give any account. The attempt to get into parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgment wrong. Young, after he took orders became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the Biographia, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at at St James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears. But we must pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a Letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek:

> *In joy once join'd*, in sorrow, now, for years—
> Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
> Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.

From your account of Tickell it appears that he and Young used to "communicate, to each other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least "things."

In 1719 appeared a "Paraphrase on part of the Book of Job." Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be known from his Letter to Curll: "You seem, in the Collection you propose, to have "omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean 'A Trans-"lation from Part of Job,' printed by Mr. Tonson." The dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Mr. Tonson's edition. while it speaks with satisfaction of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. But every one who sings in the dark does not sing from joy. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his Satires it would not have been impossible to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in your account of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the poems, to discover when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first Satire laments that "Guilt's chief foe in Addison is fled." The second, addressing himself, asks,

> Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,
> Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?
> A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published seperately in folio, under the title of "The Universal Passion." These passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his Satires soon after he had written the "Paraphrase on Job." The last Satire was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726. In December 1725 the king, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastick strain of compliment as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty.

From the sixth of these poems we learn,

> Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's heart
> Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art.

since the grateful poet tells us, in the next couplet,

> Her favour is diffus'd to that degree,
> Excess of goodness! it has dawn'd on me.

Her Majesty had stood godmother and given her name to a daughter of the Lady whom Young married in 1731; and had perhaps shewn some attention to Lady Elizabeth's future husband.

The fifth Satire, "On Women." was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these poems, when in 1728, he gathered them into one publication, he prefixed a preface; in which he observes, that "no man can converse "much in the world but, at what he meets with, he must either be insensible "or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridi-"cule," he adds, "I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and "gives vice and folly the greatest offence. Laughing at the misconduct of "the world, will in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable pas-"sion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another than "by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and so of course thought, the lively and witty satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life wrote the "Last Day." After all, Swift pronounced of these satires, that they should either have been more angry, or more merry.

Is it not somewhat singular that Young preserved, without any palliation this preface, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains the mournful, angry, gloomy "Night Thoughts?"

At the conclusion of the preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the "Birth of Love" to modern poetry, with the addition, "that poetry, like "Love,

"Love, is a little subject to blindness, which makes her mistake her way to "preferments and honours; and that she retains a dutiful admiration of her "father's family; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her "mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours, but was there not something like blindness in the flattery which he sometimes forced her, and her sister Prose, to utter? She was always, indeed, taught by him to entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but surely Young, though nearly related to Poetry, had no connexion with her whom Plato makes the mother of Love. That he could not well complain of being related to Poverty appears clearly from the frequent bounties which his gratitude records, and from the wealth which he left behind him. By "The Universal Passion" he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thousand pounds. A considerable sum had already been swallowed up in the South-Sea: For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His muse makes poetical use more than once of a South-Sea Dream.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his Manuscript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his "Universal "Passion," received from the Duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, "Two thousand pounds for a "poem!" he said it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth four thousand.

This story may be true; but it seems to have been raised from the two answers of Lord Burghleigh and Sir Philip Sidney in Spencer's Life.

After inscribing his Satires, not perhaps without the hope of preferments and honours, to such names as the Duke of Dorset, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germain, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyric. In 1726, he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title sufficiently explains the intention. If Young must be acknowledged a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a lasting one. "The Instalment" is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his *excuseable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality:

> O how I long, enkindled by the theme,
> In deep eternity to launch thy name!

The bounty of the former reign seems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it might have been, the poet thought he deserved it; for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acacknowledgment, would now perhaps never have been known:

> My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire,
> The streams of Royal bounty, turned by thee,
> Refresh the dry domains of poesy.

If

If the purity of modern patriotism will term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with "Ocean, an Ode." The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, wich recommended the encrease and encouragement of the seamen; that they might be "invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country;" a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an "Ode to the King, Pater Patriæ," and an "Essay on Lyrick Poetry." It is but justice to confess, that he preserved neither of them; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition, and in the last, consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a "Wish," that concluded the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming; and of which few, after having formed it, would confess something like their shame by suppression.

It stood originally so high in the author's opinion, that he intituled the poem, "Ocean, an Ode. Concluding with a Wish." This Wish consists of thirteen stanzas. The first runs thus:

O may I *steal*
Along the *vale*
Of humble life, secure from foes!
My friend sincere,
My judgment clear,
And gentle business my repose!

The three last stanzas are not more remarkable for just rhymes; but, altogether, they will make rather a curious page in the life of Young,

Prophetic schemes,
And golden dreams,
May I, unsanguine, cast away!
Have what I *have*,
And live, not *leave*,
Enamour'd of the present day!

My hours my own!
My faults unknown!
My chief revenue in content!
Then leave one *beam*
Of honest *fame!*
And scorn the labour'd monument!

Unhurt my urn
Till that great TURN
When mighty Nature's self shall die,

Time cease to glide,
With human pride,
Sunk in the ocean of eternity!

It is whimsical that he, who was soon to bid adieu to rhyme, should fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his "Essay on Lyrick Poetry," prefixed to the poem--"For the more "*harmony* likewise I chose the frequent return of rhyme, which laid me "under great difficulties. But difficulties, overcome, give grace and plea-"sure. Nor can I account for the *pleasure of rhyme in general* (of which the "moderns are too fond) but from this truth." Yet the moderns surely deserve not much censure for their fondness of what, by his own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

The next paragraph in his Essay did not occur to him when he talked of "that great turn" in the stanza just quoted. "But then the writer must "take care that the difficulty is overcome. That is, he must make rhyme "consistent with as perfect sense and expression, as could be expected if he "was perfectly free from that shackle."

Another part of this Essay will convict the following stanza of, what every reader will discover in it, "involuntary burlesque"

The northern blast,
The shatter'd mast,
The syrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,
The breaking spout.
The *stars gone out*
The boiling streight, the monster's shock.

But would the English poets fill quite so many volumes, if all their productions were to be tried, like this, by an elaborate essay on each particular species of poetry of which they exhibit specimens?

If Young be not a lyric poet, he is at least a critic in that sort of poetry; and, if his lyric poetry can be proved bad, it was first proved so by his own criticism. This surely is candid.

Milbourne was styled by Pope "the fairest of critics," only because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's which he condemned, and with which every reader had it otherwise in his power to compare it. Young was surely not the most unfair of poets for prefixing to a lyric composition an essay on Lyric Poetry so just and impartial as to condemn himself.

We shall soon come to a work, before which we find indeed no critical Essay, but which disdains to shrink from the touchstone of the severest critic; and which certainly, as I remember to have heard you say, if it contain some of the worst, contains also some of the best things in the language.

Soon

Soon after the appearance of "Ocean," when he was almost fifty, Young entered into Orders. In April 1728, not long after he put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of "The Brothers," which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to "The Brothers," the only appendages to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an historical Epilogue. Finding that "Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied," he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus "for this night's deed."

Of Young's taking orders something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of the poet in a singular light. When he determined on the Church, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in Theology, but to Pope, who, in a youthful frolick, advised the diligent perusal of Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls "an "irretrievable derangement."

That attachment to his favourite study, which made him think a poet the surest guide in his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry were the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took orders, he published in prose, 1728, "A true Estimate of Human Life," dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the Queen; and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of King Charles, intituled, "An Apology for Princes, "or the Reverence due to Government." But the "Second Discourse," the counterpart of his "Estimate," without which it cannot be called "a "true estimate," though in 1728 it was announced as "soon to be pub- "lished," never appeared; and his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he relapsed to poetry, and sent into the world "Imperium "Pelagi: a Naval Lyric, written in imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned "by his Majesty's Return from Hanover, September, 1729, and the suc- "ceeding Peace." It is inscribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Ode is the most spirited kind of Poetry, and that the Pindaric is the most spirited kind of Ode. "This I speak" he adds, with sufficient candour, "at my own very great peril. But truth has an eternal "title to our confession, though we are sure to suffer by it." Behold, again, "the fairest of poets. Young's "Imperium Pelagi" was ridiculed in Field- "ings Tom Thumb;" but, let us not forget that it was one of his pieces *which the* author of the "Night Thoughts" deliberately refused to own.

Not

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two Epistles to Pope, "concerning the Authors of the Age," 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In May 1731, he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connexion with this lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Anne Wharton, who was coheiress of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley in Oxfordshire. Poetry had lately been taught by Addison to aspire to the arms of nobility, though not with extraordinary happiness.

We may naturally conclude that Young now gave himself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner in which they had so frequently been exerted.

The next production of his Muse was "The Sea-piece," in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an "Extempore Epigram on "Voltaire;" who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, "Milton's allegory of Sin and Death"——

> You are so witty, profligate, and thin,
> At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin.

From the following passage in the poetical Dedication of his "Sea-piece" to Voltaire, it seems that this extemporaneous reproof, if it must be extemporaneous, for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof, was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than the distich just quoted.

> No stranger, Sir, though born in foreign climes,
> On *Dorset* Downs, when Milton's page,
> With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
> Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with *gentle* rhymes?

By "Dorset Downs" he probably meant Mr. Dodington's seat. In Pitt's Poems is "An Epistle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetshire, "on the Review at Sarum, 1722."

> While with your Dodington retir'd you sit,
> Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit, &c.

Thomson, in his Autumn, addressing Mr. Dodington, calls his seat the seat of the Muses,

> Where, in the secret bower and winding walk,
> For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.

The

The praises Thomson bestows but a few lines before on Philips, the second

> Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
> With British freedom sing the British song,

added to Thomson's example and success, might perhaps induce Young, as we shall see presently, to write his great work without rhyme.

In 1734 he published "The foreign Address, or the best Argument for "Peace, occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Writ-"ten in the Character of a Sailor." It is not to be found in the author's four volumes.

He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and perhaps at last resolved to turn his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode, which few of Young's readers will regret.

> My shell, which Clio gave, which *Kings applaud*,
> Which Europe's bleeding Genius called abroad,
> Adieu!

In a species of poetry altogether his own he next tried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1741. Lady Elizabeth had lost, after her marriage with Young, an amiable daughter, by her former husband, just after she was married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston; Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife, though he was married a second time to a daughter of Sir John Barnard's, whose son is the present peer. Mr. and Mrs. Temple have generally been considered as Philander and Narcissa. From the great friendship which constantly subsisted between Mr. Temple and Young, as well as from other circumstances, it is probable that the poet had both him and Mrs. Temple in view for these characters; though at the same time some passages respecting Philander do not appear to suit either Mr. Temple or any other person with whom Young was known to be connected or acquainted, while all the circumstances relating to Narcissa have been constantly found applicable to Young's daughter-in-law.

At what short intervals the poet tells us he was wounded by the deaths of the three persons particularly lamented, none that has read the "Night "Thoughts" (and who has not read them?) needs to be informed.

> Insatiate Archer! could not one suffice?
> Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;
> And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

Yet how is it possible that Mr. and Mrs. Temple and Lady Elizabeth Young could be these three victims, over whom Young has hitherto been pitied

pitied for having to pour the "Midnight Sorrows" of his religious poetry? Mrs. Temple died in 1736; Mr. Temple four years afterwards in 1740; and the poet's wife seven months after Mr. Temple in 1741. How could the insatiate Archer thrice slay his peace, in these three persons, "ere thrice the moon had fill'd her horn?"

But in the short preface to "The Complaint" he seriously tells us, "that "the occasion of this poem was real, not fictitious; and that the facts "mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of "the writer." It is probable, therefore, that in these three contradictory lines the poet complains more than the father-in-law, the friend, or the widower.

Whatever names belong to these facts, or, if the names be those generally supposed, whatever heightening a poet's sorrow may have given the facts; to the sorrow Young felt from them, religion and morality are indebted for the "Night Thoughts." There is a pleasure sure in sadness which mourners only know!

Of these poems the two or three first have been perused perhaps more eagerly and more frequently than the rest. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his original motive for taking up the pen was answered; his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We still find the same pious poet; but we hear less of Philander and Narcissa, and less of the mourner whom he loved to pity.

Mrs. Temple died of a consumption at Lyons, in her way to Nice, the year after her marriage; that is, when poetry relates the fact, "in her bridal hour." It is more than poetically true, that Young accompanied her to the continent.

> I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid North,
> And bore her nearer to the sun.

But in vain. Her funeral was attended with the difficulties painted in such animated colours in Night the Third. After her death, the remainder of the party passed the ensuing winter at Nice.

The poet seems perhaps in these compositions to dwell with more melancholy on the death of Philander and Narcissa, than of his wife. But it is only for this reason. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the "Night Thoughts" Philander and Narcissa, are often mentioned, and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living, to whom the Prince of Wales was godfather.

That domestic grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language, it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness to contend, that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means sure that,

In the fifth "Night"—

> And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
> Of life? to hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of Welwyn?

Eight "Night—"

> In foreign realms (for thou hast travelled far)—

which even now does not apply to his son.

In "Night" five—

> So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate,
> Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes,
> And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth?

At the beginning of the fifth "Night" we find—

> Lorenzo, to recriminate is just,
> I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

But, to cut short all enquiry; if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the "Night Thoughts" was not old enough, when they were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The "Night Thoughts" were begun immediately after the mournful event of 1741. The first "Nights" appear in the books of the company of Stationers, as the property of Robert Dodsley, 1742. The Preface to "Night" seven is dated July the 7th, 1744. The marriage in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in May, 1731. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1741 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this father to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only eight years old.

An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputation of the living and of the dead.

Who then was Lorenzo? exclaims the readers I have mentioned. If we cannot be sure that he was his son, which would have been finely terrible was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the Poet's fancy: like the Quintus of Anti-Lucretius, "quo nomine," says Polignac, "quemvis Atheum intellige.' That this was the case, many expressions

xpressions in the "Night Thoughts" would seem to prove, did not a pas-
age in "Night" Eight appear to shew that he had somebody in his eye for
he groundwork at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be
eigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only
ives the initial letter.

> Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead,
> Or send thee to her hermitage with L.—

The Biographia, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that
on's life-time, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the his-
ory of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Ox-
ord for misbehaviour. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to il-
ustrate the life of Young, it is not easy to discover. Was the son of the
uthor of the "Night Thoughts indeed forbidden his college for a time, at
ne of our universities? The author of "Paradise Lost" is by some sup-
posed to have been disgracefully ejected from the other. From juvenile
ollies who is free? But, whatever the Biographia choose to relate, the son
f Young experienced no dismission from his college either lasting or tem-
porary.

Yet, were nature to indulge him with a second youth, and to leave him
t the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably
pend it differently—who would not?—he would certainly be the occasion
f less uneasiness to his father. But, from the same experience, he would
s certainly, in the same case, be treated differently by his father.

Young was a poet: poets, with reverence be it spoken, do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when compelled by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poets.

He, who is connected with the author of the "Night Thoughts," only by veneration for the Poet and the Christian, may be allowed to observe, that Young is one of those, concerning whom, as you remark in your account of Addison, it is proper rather to say "nothing that is false than all that is true."

But the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expence of his father's memory, from follies which, if it may be thought blameable in a boy to have commited them, it is surely praise-worthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of the "Night Thoughts," notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned

weaned himself from Earls and Dukes, from Speakers of the House of Commons, Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In "Night" Eight the politician plainly betrays himself——

Think no post needful that demands a knave,
When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
So P—— thought: think better if you can.

Yet it must be confessed, that at the conclusion of "Night" Nine, weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his soul,

Henceforth
Thy *patron* be, whose diadem has dropt
Yon gems of heaven; Eternity thy prize;
And leave the racers of the world their own.

The Fourth "Night" was addressed by "a much-indebted Muse" to the Honorable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke; who meant to have laid the Muse under still greater obligations, by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The first "Night" concludes with this passage——

Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides:
Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your strain:
Or his who made Meonides our own!
Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing.
Oh had he prest his theme, pursued the track
Which opens out of darkness into day!
Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd, where I sink, and sung immortal man——
How had it blest mankind, and rescued me!

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of an "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his "Wing of Fire," and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and approved the dedication, he countenanced this attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muse.

Part of "paper-sparing" Pope's Third Book of the "Odyssey," deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a letter signed E. Young, which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The request was a prologue, I am told.

"Dear

"Dear Sir, May the 2d.

"Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the "favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that in- "stance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friendship I am very "sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this "thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to "conceive how a 'trifle of this nature may be of serious moment to me; and "while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall "not be so absurd as to make any further step without it. I know you are "much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leisure.

"I am, Sir, your most faithful
"and obedient servant,
"E. YOUNG."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in "Night" Seven:

Pope, who couldst make immortals, art thou dead?

Either the "Essay," then, was dedicated to a patron who disapproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young appears, in his old age, to have bartered for a dedication, an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in "Night" Four, should not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand, from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind and the complexion of his life.

Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice),
*My very master knows me not.*

*

I've been so long remember'd I'm forgot.

*

When in his courtiers' ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the Nectar of the Great;
And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.

*

Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I *besiege*.

If

If this song lives, Posterity shall know
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late;
Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme
For future vacancies in church or state,

Deduct from the writer's age "twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy," and you will still leave him more than forty when he sate down to the miserable siege of court-favour. He has before told us

"A fool at forty is a fool indeed."

After all, the siege seems to have been raised only in consequence of what the General thought his "death-bed."

By these extraordinary Poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much, I hope by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself. "The Works of the "Author of the Night Thoughts." While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear perhaps in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator: he would not pass for a worse christian, or for a worse man. This enviable praise is due to Young. Can it be claimed by every writer? His dedications, after all, he had perhaps no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgement of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his "Night "Thoughts" the French are particularly fond?

Of the "Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk," dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of English Poetry, and that I am sorry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the "Night Thoughts" of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote "Reflections on the "public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle," indignant, as it appears, to behold

—a pope-bred princeling crawl ashore,
And whistle cut threats, with those swords that scrap'd
Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance,
To cut his passage to the British throne,

This

This political poem might be called a "Night Thought." Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the "Night Thoughts." though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the second edition of Howe's "Devout Meditations" is a Letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macauly, Esq; thanking him for the book, which he says "he shall never "lay far out of his reach: for a greater demonstration of a sound head and a sincere heart he never saw."

In 1753, when "The Brothers" had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of "The Brothers" would amount. In this calculation he was deceived; but by the bad success of his play the Society was not a loser. The author made up the sum he originally intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entituled, "The Centaur not fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue." The conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third Letter is described the death-bed of the "gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished and most "wretched Altamont." His last words were—"My principles "have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my un-"kindness has murdered my wife!" Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the twin production of fancy, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness. Report has been accustomed to call Altamont Lord Euston.

"The Old Man's Relapse," occasioned by an Epistle to Walpole, if written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a Miscellany published thirty years before his death. In 1758, he exhibited "the Old Man's Relapse" in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a sermon addressed to the King.

The lively Letter in prose on "Original Composition," addressed to Richardson the author of Clarissa, appeared in 1759. Though he despair "of breaking through the frozen obstructions of age and care's incumbent "cloud, into that flow of thought and brightness of expression which sub-"jects so polite require;" yet is it more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded fourscore. Some sevenfold volumes put him in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conflagration.

——————ostia septem
Pulverulenta vocant, septem sine flumine valles.

Such leaden labours are like Lycurgus's iron money, which was so much less in value than in bulk, that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

If there is a famine of invention in the land, we must travel, he says, like Joseph's brethren, far for food; we must visit the remote and rich antients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home; that, like the widow's cruse, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. He asks why it should seem altogether impossible, that Heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and fair? And Johnson, he tells us, was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it.

Is this "care's incumbent cloud," or "the frozen obstructions of age?"

In this letter Pope is severely censured for his "fall from Homer's numbers, free" as air, lofty and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and "tinkling sounds; for putting Achilles in petticoats a second time:" but we are told that the dying swan talked over an Epic plan with Young a few weeks before his decease.

Young's chief inducement to write this letter was, as he confesses, that he might erect a monumental marble to the memory of an old friend. He, who employed his pious pen for almost the last time in thus doing justice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison, might probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lesson for the deaths of others.

In the postcript he writes to Richardson, that he will see in his next how far Addison is an original. But no other letter appears.

The few lines which stand in the last edition, as "sent by Lord Melcombe "to Dr. Young, not long before his Lordship's death," were indeed so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by "The Muse's "latest Spark." The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his Tusculum "La Trappe."

"Love thy country, wish it well,
Not with too intense a care,
'Tis enough, that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, Flattery's praise,
With unmoved indifference view;
Learn to tread Life's dangerous maze,
With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void of strong desire and fear,
Life's wide ocean trust no more;
Strive thy little bark to steer
With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the Port of Peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free,
So, when thou art called from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be;

Easy shall thy passage be,
Chearful thy allotted stay,
Short the account 'twixt God and thee;
Hope shall meet thee on the way;

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's self shall let thee in,
Where its never changing state
Full perfection shall begin."

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

"*La Trappe*, the 29th of Oct. 1761.

"Dear Sir,

"You seemed to like the ode I sent you for your amusement; I now "send it you as a present. If you please to accept of it, and are willing that "our friendship should be known when we are gone, you will be pleased "to leave this among those of your own papers that may possibly see the "light by a posthumous publication. God send us health while we stay, "and an easy journey!

"My dear Dr. Young,

"Yours, most cordially,

"MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a short time before his death, Young published "Resignation." Notwithstanding the manner in which it was really forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise, on the other side of fourscore, by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited?

To Mrs. Montagu, the famous champion of Shakspeare, I am indebted for the history of "Resignation." Observing that Mrs. Boscawen, in the midst of her grief for the loss of the admiral, derived consolation from the perusal of the "Night Thoughts," Mrs. Montagu proposed a visit to the author. From conversing with Young, Mrs. Boscawen derived still further consolation; and to that visit she and the world were indebted for this poem. It compliments Mrs. Montagu in the following lines:

Yet, write I must. A Lady sues,
How shameful her request!
My brain in labour with dull rhyme,
Her's teeming with the best!

And again———

A friend you have and I the same,
Whose prudent soft address
Will bring to life those healing thoughts
Which died in your distress,

That friend, the spirit of my theme
Extracting for your ease,
Will leave to me the dreg, in thoughts
Too common; such as these.

By the same Lady I am enabled to say, in her own words, that Young's unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion, than even in the author; that the Christian was in him a character still more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime than the poet; and that, in his ordinary conversation,

—letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky.

Notwithstanding Young had said, in his "Conjectures on original Composition," that "blank verse is verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaimed, re-"inthroned in the true language of the Gods:" notwithstanding he administered consolation to his own grief in this immortal language. Mrs Boscawen was comforted in rhyme.

While the poet and the christian were applying this comfort, Young had himself occasion for comfort, in consequence of the sudden death of Richardson, who was printing the former part of the poem. Of Richardson's death he says———

When heaven would kindly set us free,
And earth's enchantment end;
It takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a friend.

To "Resignation" was prefixed an Apology for its appearance: to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he desires of his executors, *in a particular manner*, that all his manuscript book and writings whatever, might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his housekeeper, to whom he left 1000l. "that all his manuscripts might be destroyed as soon as he was dead, which would greatly oblige her deceased *friend*."

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviving those he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two *friends*, his housekeeper and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may serve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for sounding names and titles, to be informed that the author of the "Night Thoughts" did not blush to leave a legacy to his "friend Henry Stevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate." Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young. But, at eighty-four "where," as he asks in *The Centaur*, "is that world into which we were born?"

The same humility which marked a hatter and housekeeper for the friends of the author of the "Night Thoughts," had before bestowed the same title on his footman, in an epitaph in his "Church-yard" upon James Barker, dated 1749; which I am glad to find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published by Kidgell in 1755, called "The Card," under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fusby.

In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young.

He had performed no duty for three or four years, but he retained his intellects to the last.

Much is told in the "Biographia," which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial: of the master and children of a charity-school, which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was not caused to toll as often as upon those occasions bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead, been shewn in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the Preface to "Night" Seven, for resenting his friend's request about his funeral.

During some part of his life Young was abroad, but I have not been able to learn any particulars.

In his seventh Satire he says,

> When, after battle, I the field have SEEN
> Spread o'er with ghastly shapes which once were *men*.

It is known also, that from this or from some other field he once wandered into the camp, with a classic in his hand, which he was reading intently; and had some difficulty to prove that he was only an absent poet, and not a spy.

The

The curious reader of Young's life will naturally inquire to what it was owing that, though he lived almost forty years after he took Orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the "Night "Thoughts" ended his days upon a Living which came to him from his College without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the Church. To satisfy curiosity of this kind is, at this distance of time, far from easy. The parties themselves know not often, at the instant, why they are neglected, or why they are preferred. The neglect of Young is by some ascribed to his having attached himself to the Prince of Wales, and to his having preached an offensive sermon at St. James's. It has been told me that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, whenever any one reminded the King of Young, the only answer was, "he has a pension." All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following Letter from Secker, only serves to shew at what a late period of life the author of the "Night "Thoughts" solicited preferment:

Deanery of St. Paul's, July 8, 1758.

"Good Dr. Young,

"I have long wondered, that more suitable notice of your great merit "hath not been taken by persons in power. But how to remedy the omis- "sion I see not. No encouragement hath ever been given me to mention "things of this nature to his Majesty. And therefore, in all likelihood, "the only consequence of doing it would be weakening the little influence, "which else I may possibly have on some other occasions. Your fortune "and your reputation set you above the need of advancement; and your "sentiments, above that concern for it, on your own account, which, on "that of the public, is sincerely felt by,

"Your loving Brother,

"THO. CANT."

At last at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life seems to have panted. Though he took Orders, he never entirely shook off Politics. He was always the Lion of his master Milton, "pawing to get free his hinder parts." By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Again, Young was a poet; and again, with reverence be it spoken, poets by profession do not always make the best clergymen. If the author of the "Night Thoughts" composed many sermons, he did not oblige the public with many.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out *for a* man retired from the world. But he seemed to have forgotten that the same

same verse which contains "oblitus meorum," contains also "obliviscendus "et illis." The brittle chain of worldly friendship and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore, it only appears that the shore also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world will find himself, in reality, deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the coxcomb treats his mistress; to be threatened with desertion, in order to increase fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with his tub.

Of the domestick manners and petty habits of the author of the "Night Thoughts," I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority: but who shall dare to say, To-morrow I will be wise or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon enquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a Letter from Tscharner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tscharner says, he has lately spent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author tastes all the ease and pleasure mankind can desire. "Every thing about him shews the man, each individual being placed by rule. All is neat without art. He is very pleasant in conversation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may possibly be true, but Tscharner's was a first visit, a visit of curiosity and admiration, and a visit which the author expected.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's Parson Adams. The original of that famous painting was William Young, who was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the booksellers from Greek; and, if he did not seem to be his own friend, was at least no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world, argues, were it not sufficiently known, that the author of the "Night Thoughts" bore some resemblance to Adams.

The attention which Young bestowed upon the perusal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any passage pleased him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On these passages he bestowed a second reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned to much of what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books, which I have seen, are by those notes of approbation so swelled beyond their real bulk, that they will hardly shut.

What

What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame?
Earth's highest station ends in *Here he lies!*
And *dust to dust* concludes her noblest song.

The author of these lines is not without his *Hic jacet.*

By the good sense of his son, it contains none of that praise which no marble can make the bad or the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deserving.

M. S.
Optimi parentis
EDWARDI YOUNG, LL. D.
Hujus Ecclesiæ rect.
Et Elizabethæ
fæm. prænob.
Conjugis ejus amantissimæ
Pio & gratissimo animo
Hoc marmor posuit
F. Y.
Filius superstes.

Is it not strange that the author of the "Night Thoughts" has inscribed no monument to the memory of his lamented wife? Yet, what marble will endure as long as the poems?

Such, my good friend, is the account which I have been able to collect of the great Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend,

HERBERT CROFT, Jun.

Lincoln's-Inn,
Sept. 1780.

P. S. This account of Young was seen by you in manuscript, you know, Sir; and, though I could not prevail on you to make any alterations, you insisted on striking out one passage, because it said, that, if I did not wish you to live long for your sake, I did for the sake of myself and of the world. But this postscript you will not see before the printing of it; and I will say here, in spite of you, how I feel myself honoured and bettered by your friendship: and that, if I do credit to the church, after which I always longed, and for which I am now going to give in exchange the bar, though not at so late a period of life as Young took orders, it will be owing, in no small measure, to my having had the happiness of calling the author of "The Rambler" my friend.

Oxford,
Sept. 1782.

H. C.

Of

Of Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment, and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.

He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who observing their own faults become gradually correct. His Poem on the "Last Day," his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the LAST DAY makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction, and disdains expression.

His story of "Jane Grey" was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but Jane is too heroic to be pitied.

The "Universal Passion" is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of Epigrams: but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth.

His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and Juvenal; and he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his "Paraphrase on Job" may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful; he indeed favoured himself, by chusing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his "Night Thoughts" he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness

of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was the "Resignation;" in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his "Ocean" or his "Merchant." It was very falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour.

His tragedies not making part of the Collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Steevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three Plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In "Busiris" there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The "Revenge" approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by "Othello;" but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of "The Brothers" I may be allowed to say nothing since nothing was ever said of it by the publick.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of *Quicksilver* with *Pleasure*, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as, when in his "Night Thoughts," having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the *cluster* of creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great vine, drinking "the nectareous juice of immortal life."

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable. In the "Last Day," he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the "Trump of Doom," by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

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The Prophet says of Tyre, that "her Merchants are Princes." Young says of Tyre in his Merchant,"

Her merchants Princes, and each *deck a Throne.*

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, "climes were paid down." Antithesis is his favourite. "They for kindness hate;" and "because she's right, she's ever in the wrong."

His versification is his own, neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers; he picks up no hemistichs, he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry, and that he composed with great labour, and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

# MALLET.

OF DAVID MALLET, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan, that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author, called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be *Janitor* of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the Duke of Montrose applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were sent to see the world, they were entrusted to his care; and having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he resided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank, and the highest character, to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the series. His first production was "William and Margaret*;" of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not

* Mallet's "William and Margaret" was printed in Aaron Hill's "Plain Dealer," No. 36. July 24, 1724. In its original state it was very different from what it is in the last edition of his works. Dr. J.

Not long afterwards he published the "Excursion" (1728); a desultory and capricious view of such scenes of Nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of the images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose "Seasons" were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on "Verbal Criticism" (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit, and more confidence than knowledge. The versification is tolerable, nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was "Eurydice," acted at Drury Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a Prologue and Epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country, I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his "Essay on Man," but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly what there was new. Mallet told him, that the newest piece was something called an "Essay on Man," which he had inspected idly, and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of his subject, had tossed it away. Pope, to punish his self-conceit, told him the secret.

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1740) for the press, Mallet was employed to prefix a Life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some affectation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that when he afterwards undertook the Life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might perhaps forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When the Prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, setting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate court, he endeavoured to encrease his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year; Thomson likewise had a pension; and they were associated in the composition of the "Masque of Alfred," which in its original state was played at Cliefden in 1740;

1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury Lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the "Life of Marlborough," let him know that in the series of great men, quickly to be exhibited, he should *find a nich* for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. Mr. Mallet," says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to "write for the stage?" Mallet then confessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it: and "Alfred" was produced.

The long retardation of the Life of the duke of Marlborough shews, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was soon determined, that his story should be delivered to posterity; and the papers supposed to contain the necessary information were delivered to the lord Molesworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When Molesworth died, the same papers were transferred with the same design to Sir Richard Steele, who in some of his exigencies put them in pawn. They then remained with the old dutchess, who in her will assigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thousand pounds, and a prohibition to insert any verses. Glover rejected, I suppose, with disdain the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the Prince's service he published "Mustapha" with a Prologue by Thomson, not mean, but far inferior to that which he had received from Mallet for "Agamemnon." The Epilogue said to be written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the Prince his master. It was acted at Drury Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the masque of "Alfred," in conjunction with Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was "Amyntor and Theodora," (1747), a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy. But it is blank verse. This he sold to Vaillant for one hundred and twenty pounds. The first sale was not great, and it is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the Prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain, or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by

by an act, which I hope was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised pamphlet called "The "Patriot King," Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1749) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was referred to arbitrators; but, when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and by the help of Miller the bookseller, published all that he could find, but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1755, his masque of "Britannia," was acted at Drury Lane; and his tragedy of "Elvira" in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper of the Book of Entries for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war, when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the public vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a "Plain Man." The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he, for his seasonable intervention, had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter who married an Italian of rank named Cilesia, wrote a tragedy called "Almida," which was acted at Drury Lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed, his appearance till he grew corpulent was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent. His Dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten: his blank verse seems to my ear the echo of Thomson. His "Life of Bacon" is known as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer, bustling in the world, shewing himself in publick, and emerging occasionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence; but which conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topicks of conversation, and other modes of amusement.

AKENSIDE.

# AKENSIDE.

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the ninth of November, 1721, at Newcastle upon Tyne. His father Mark was a butcher, of the Presbyterian sect; his mother's name was Mary Lumsden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle; and was afterwards instructed by Mr. Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a dissenting minister, and received some assistance from the fund which the Dissenters employ in educating young men of scanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other scenes, and prompted other hopes: he determined to study physic, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpose, he justly thought it dishonourable to retain.

Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a Dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.

Akenside was one of those poets who have felt very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greatest work, "The Pleasures of Imagination," appeared in 1744. I have heard Dodsley, by whom it was published, relate that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was an hundred and twenty pounds, being such as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, advised him not to make a niggardly offer; for "this was no every-day writer."

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three *years afterwards (May 16, 1744)* became doctor of physic, having, accord-

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ing to the custom of the Dutch Universities, published a thesis, or dissertation. The subject which he chose was "The Original and Growth of the Human Fœtus;" in which he is said to have departed, with great judgment, from the opinion then established, and to have delivered that which has been since confirmed and received.

Akenside was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the sound of liberty, and by an eccentricity which such dispositions do not easily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing established. He adopted Shaftesbury's foolish assertion of the efficacy of ridicule for the discovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and defended by Dyson; Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The result of all the arguments which have been produced in a long and eager discussion of this idle question, may easily be collected. If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the test of ridicule. Two men fearing, one a real and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representation; and the true state of both cases must be known, before it can be decided whose terror is rational, and whose is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who to be despised. Both are for a while equally exposed to laughter, but both are not therefore equally contemptible.

In the revisal of his poem, which he died before he had finished, he omitted the lines which had given occasion to Warburton's objections.

He published, soon after his return from Leyden (1745), his first collection of odes; and was impelled by his rage of patriotism to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profession, he first commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouse then practised, with such reputation and success, that a stranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Akenside tried the contest a while; and having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampstead, where he resided more than two years, and then fixed himself in London, the proper place for a man of accomplishments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A physician in a great city seems to be the mere play-thing of Fortune; his degree of reputation is, for the most part, totally casual: they that employ him know not his excellence; they that reject

to lyrick poetry, having neither the ease and airiness of the lighter, nor the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former power seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant. Yet such was his love of lyricks, that, having written with great vigour and poignancy his "Epistle to Curio," he transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be said; the sentiments commonly want force, nature, or novelty; the diction is sometimes harsh and uncouth, the stanza's ill-constructed and unpleasant, and the rhymes dissonant, or unskilfully disposed, too distant from each other, or arranged with too little regard to establish use, and therefore perplexing to the ear, which in a short composition has not time to grow familiar with an innovation.

To examine such compositions singly cannot be required; they have doubtless brighter and and darker parts: but when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared; for to what use can the work be criticised that will not be read?

# GRAY.

THOMAS GRAY, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eton under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, then assistant to Dr. George; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but Gray seems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived sullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the Common Law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whose frienship he had gained at Eton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's Letters contain a very pleasing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendships are easily dissolved: at Florence they quarrelled, and parted; and Mr. Walpole is content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look, however without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel; and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.

He returned to England in September, 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father; who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune, that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon

soon after became Bachelor of Civil Law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or professing to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which he shews in his Letters, and in the "Ode to May," which Mr. Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of "Agrippina," a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgment of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that "Agrippina" was never finished.

In this year (1742) Gray seems first to have applied himself seriously to poetry; for in this year were produced the "Ode to Spring" his Prospect of Eton," and his "Ode to Adversity." He began likewise a Latin poem, "De Principiis cogitandi."

It may be collected from the narrative of Mr. Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry: perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design: for though there is at present some embarrassment in his phrase, and some harshness in his lyrick numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very few possess; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would quickly have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself; when Mr. Mason, being elected fellow of Pembroke Hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger and the coldness of a critick.

In this retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the "Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat;" and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance on "Government and Education," of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed "Elegy in the Churchyard," which, finding its way into a Magazine, first, I believe, made him known to the publick.

An invitation from lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to an odd composition called "A Long Story," which adds little to Gray's character.

Several of his pieces were published (1753), with designs by Mr. Bentley, and, that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.

Some time afterwards (1756) some young men of the college, whose *chambers were near his*, diverted themselves with disturbing him by frequent and

nd troublesome noises, and, as is said, by pranks yet more offensive and ontemptuous. This insolence, having endured it a while, he represented o the governors of the society, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and inding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke Hall.

In 1757 he published "The Progress of Poetry" and "The Bard," two ompositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in nute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to unlerstand them, though Warburton said that they were understood as well as he works of Milton and Shakespear, which it is the fashion to admire. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect, and in a short time many were content o be shewn beauties which they could not see.

Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

His curiosity not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing: and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on "Oblivion" and "Obscurity," in which his lyrick performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Professor of Modern History at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, "cockered and spirited up," till he asked it of lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal, and the place was given to Mr. Brocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant: for, as his comprehension was ample, his curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Law, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuse.

What he had formerly solicited in vain, was at last given him without solicitation. The Professorship of History became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglect of duty, and appeasing his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a resolution which he believed himself to have made, of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited (1769) Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

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His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and, yielding to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a Letter written to my friend Mr. Boswell, by the Rev. Mr. Temple, rector of St. Gluvias in Cornwall; and am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to belive it true.

"Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements, and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy; and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had, in some degree, that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve: though he seemed to value others chiefly according to the progress they had made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be considered himself merely as a man of letters: and though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be said, What signifies so much knowledge, when it produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few of his poems? But let it be considered that Mr. Gray was to others at least innocently employed; to himself, certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he was every day making some new acquisition in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind were shewn to him without a mask; and he was taught to consider every thing as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that state wherein God hath placed us."

To this character Mr. Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most "before those whom he did not wish to please;" and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me from the slight inspection of his Letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that *his curiosity was unlimited, and his* judgment cultivated; that he was a man like

likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was fastidious and hard to please. His contempt, however, is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism, and infidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

"You say you cannot conceive how lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe any thing at all provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads no where; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter; for a new road is become an old one."

Mr. Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastick foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior.

GRAY's Poetry is now to be considered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on "Spring," has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the *cultured* plain, the *daisied* bank; but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the *honied* Spring. The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem "On the Cat" was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza "the azure flowers *that* blow," shew resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. Selima, the Cat, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is good use made of it when it is done; for of the two lines

What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that a favourite has no friend;" but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if *what glistered* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The "Prospect of Eton College" suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet "buxom health" is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use; finding in Dryden "honey redolent of Spring," an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making "gales" to be "redolent of joy and youth."

Of the "Ode on Adversity," the hint was at first taken from "O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium; but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetic and rational, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the *wonderful* "Wonder of Wonders," the two Sister Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the "Progress of Poetry."

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of "spreading sound" and running water." A "stream of "music," may be allowed; but where does "music," however "smooth and strong," after having visited the "verdant vales, rowl down the steep amain," so as that "rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar." If this be said of Music, it is nonsense if it be said of Water, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chace a school boy to his common places.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's "velvet-green" has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily empounded. "Many-twinkling" was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say "many-spotted," but scarcely "many-spotting." This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry; but I am afraid *that the conclusion will not rise* from the premises. The caverns of the North

North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of "Glory and generous "Shame." But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with "Delphi," and "Egean," and "Ilissus," and "Meander," and "hallowed fountain," and "solemn sound; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away. His position is at last false: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was over-run by "tyrant power" and "coward vice;" nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakspeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily: the real effects of this poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar: it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

"The Bard" appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original, and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in "The "Bard" more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulis odi.*

To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that "The Bard" promotes any truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*,

*Is there ever a man in all Scotland—*

The

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, "ruin, ruthless, helm or hau-"berk," are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza the Bard is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that "Cadwallo "hush'd the stormy main," and that "Modred made huge Plinlimmon "bow his cloud-top'd head," attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the act of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of slaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to "Weave the warp, and weave the woof," perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, "Give ample room and verge enough*." He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *Hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how "towers are fed." But I will no longer look for particular faults, yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had without expence of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike, rather than please: the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshnes. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. "Double, double, toil, and trouble." He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature.

To say that he has no beauties, would be unjust: a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

His translations of Northern and Welsh poetry deserve praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

* "I have a soul, that like an *ample* shield
"Can take in all; and *verge enough* for more."

Dryden's Sebastian.

In

In the character of his Elegy I rejoice to concur with the common reader for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtility and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours, The "Church-yard" abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas, beginning Yet even these bones," are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

LYTTLETON.

# LYTTLETON.

GEORGE LYTTLETON, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttleton, of Hagley in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his school-fellows.

From Eton he went to Christ-church, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the public in a poem on "Blenheim."

He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His "Progress of "Love," and his "Persian Letters," were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.

He staid not long at Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned, he obtained a seat in parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was Commissioner of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttleton was seen in every account of every debate in the House of Commons. He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for petitioning the King to remove Walpole. His zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and when Walpole was at last hunted from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttleton from the Secret Committee.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St. James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttleton became the secretary, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He persuaded his master, whose business

it

it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-secretary, with 200l. and Thomson had a pension of 100l. a-year. For Thomson Lyttleton always retained his kindness, and was able at last to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called "The Trial "of Selim," for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes, that were at last disappointed.

Lyttleton now stood in the first rank of opposition: and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house, imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner so unjust and licentious. Lyttleton supported his friend, and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.

While he was thus conspicuous, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late lord Lyttleton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity: but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards, and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow; for, after a while, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttleton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury; and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politicks did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true, and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747), by "Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul;" a treatise to which Infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted.

"I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfac-"tion. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irre-"sistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well "defended, reward your pious labours, and grant that I may be found wor-"thy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that hap-

"piness

"piness which I don't doubt he will bountifully bestow upon you. In the "mean time, I shall never cease glorifying God, for having endowed you "with such useful talents, and giving me so good a son.

"Your affectionate father,

"THOMAS LYTTLETON."

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large estate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn, by a house of great elegance and expence, and by much attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his activity in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made in time (1754) cofferer and privy counsellor; this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the Exchequer; an office, however, that required some qualifications which he soon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiosity led him into Wales; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he seems to have deserved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and fame, he never was persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities! attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground; at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

About this time Lyttleton published his "Dialogues of the Dead," which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and when they have met, they too often part without any conclusion. He has copied Fenelon more than Fontenelle.

When they were first published, they were kindly commended by the "Critical Reviewers;" and poor Lyttleton, with humble gratitude, returned, in a note which I have read, acknowledgments which can never be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttleton, losing with the rest his employment, was recompensed with a peerage; and rested from political turbulence in the House of Lords.

His last literary production was his "History of Henry the Second," elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the press were at the expence of the author, whose ambitious accuracy

accuracy is known to have cost him at least a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a second edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without considerable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to persuade Lyttleton, as he had persuaded himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was employed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of "Henry the Second." The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttleton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the pointer, he probably gave the rest away; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When time brought the History to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the style of Doctor. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done; for to the Doctor's edition is appended, what the world had hardly seen before, a list of errors in 19 pages.

But to politicks and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttleton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man: he had a slender uncompacted frame, and a meagre face: he lasted however sixty years, and was then seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician, which will spare me the task of his moral character.

"On Sunday evening the symptoms of his lordship's disorder, which for a "week past had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance, and his lordship be- "lieved himself to be a dying man. From this time he suffered by restless- "ness rather than pain; though his nerves were apparently much fluttered, "his mental faculties never seemed stronger, when he was thoroughly awake.

"His lordship's bilious and hepatic complaints seemed alone not equal to "the expected mournful event; his long want of sleep, whether the con- "sequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is more probable, of "causes of a different kind, accounts for his loss of strength, and for his "death, very sufficiently.

"Though his lordship wished his approaching dissolution not to be lin- "gering, he waited for it with resignation. He said, 'It is a folly, a keep- "ing me in misery, now to attempt to prolong life; yet he was easily per- "suaded, for the satisfaction of others, to do or take any thing thought "proper for him. On Saturday he had been remarkably better, and we "were not without some hopes of his recovery.

"On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon, his lordship sent for me, and "said he felt a great hurry, and wished to have a little conversation with me "in order to divert it. He then proceeded to open the fountain of that "heart, from whence goodness had so long flowed as from a copious spring. "'Doctor,' said he, 'you shall be my confessor: when I first set out in

" the world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the " Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me; but I kept my " mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, " studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the " Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and it is the ground " of my future hopes. I have erred and sinned; but have repented, and " never indulged any vicious habit. In politicks, and public life, I have " made public good the rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels which " I did not at the time think the best. I have seen that I was sometimes in " the wrong, but I did not err designedly. I have endeavoured, in private " life, to do all the good in my power, and never for a moment could in- " dulge malicious or unjust designs upon any person whatsoever.

" At another time he said, 'I must leave my soul in the same state it was in " before this illness; I find this a very inconvenient time for solicitude about " any thing.'

" On the evening, when the symptoms of death came on, he said, 'I shall " die; but it will not be your fault.' When lord and lady Valentia came to " see his lordship, he gave them his solemn benediction, and said, 'Be " good, be virtuous, my lord; you must come to this.' Thus he continued " giving his dying benediction to all around him. On Monday morning a " lucid interval gave some small hopes, but these vanished in the even- " ing; and he continued dying, but with very little uneasiness, till Tuesday " morning, August 22, when between seven and eight o'clock he expired, " almost without a groan."

His lordship was buried at Hagley; and the following inscription is cut on the side of his lady's monument:

" This unadorned stone was placed here
" By the particular desire and express
" Directions of the Right Honourable
" GEORGE Lord LYTTLETON,
" Who died August 22, 1773, aged 64."

Lord Lyttleton's Poems are the works of a man of literature and judgment, devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be despised, and little to be admired. Of his "Progress of Love," it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in "Blenheim" has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether Songs or Epigrams, are sometimes spritely, and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom elevates or surprizes. But from this censure ought to be excepted his "Advice to Belinda," which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.

MOORE.

# MOORE.

EDWARD MOORE was the son of a clergyman of the English Communion, at Abingdon in Berkshire. He was born about the year 1720, and received his education from his uncle, a reputable school-master in Somersetshire. His original destination appears to have been for trade; and for some time he resided with one Mr. Jackson, an eminent merchant, who was a considerable dealer in linens. It does not appear that he ever was in business on his own account. Attached to the Muses, he early courted public attention; and in the year 1744 produced his first performance, entituled "Fables for the Female Sex," which was favourably received. In 1748 he undertook the defence of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Lyttleton, in an ironical poem called "The Trial of Selim the Persian, for high Crimes and Misdemeanors," 4to; and in the same year produced his first dramatic performance, "The Foundling," a comedy, acted at Drury Lane; but, which though aided by the performance of Garrick, Barry, Yates, Macklin, Mrs. Woffington, and Mrs. Cibber, and highly applauded and recommended by Colley Cibber, had but a moderate degree of success. In 1749, he complimented Mr. Garrick in an Ode on his marriage with Madam Violetti; and about the same period he united himself in the same state with Miss Hamilton, daughter of Mr. Hamilton, table-decker to the princesses. This lady had expressed her partiality towards him in a poem addressed to Miss Duck, daughter of the celebrated Stephen Duck, which was printed in several of the miscellaneous collections of the times.

He had relied hitherto on his pen for his support; and had some hopes, from the notice taken of him by Lord Lyttleton, of receiving from that nobleman's assistance some permanent support. In this he was disappointed. From Mr. Garrick's friendship, however, he obtained some advantages. In 1751 his comedy of "Gil Blas" was acted at Drury Lane, and, though violently opposed, was carried through nine nights. In 1752 the tragedy of "The Gamester" was performed at the same theatre with success. In each of these performances the manager exerted himself both as actor and au-

thor; and on the publication of the latter had the author's thanks for the assistance he had received.

In January, 1753, a periodical paper, called "The World, by Adam Fitz Adam," was begun by Mr. Moore, and was carried on until February 1757. In this he was assisted by Lord Chesterfield, Lord Corke, Mr Walpole, Soame Jenyns, Whitehead, Warton, and other writers of eminence; and it is but justice to observe, that the papers written by our author will suffer no injury by a comparison with those of his coadjutors. All his exertions were, however, barely sufficient to ward off the inconveniencies of poverty. In 1756 he published his works in a quarto volume; in the preface to which he says, "I have sent this, my offspring, into the world, in as "decent a dress as I was able: a legitimate one I am sure it is; and if it "should be thought defective in strength, vigour or spirit, let it be consi- "dered, that its father's marriage with the Muses, like most other marriages "into that noble family, was more from necessity than inclination." He continued "The World" until near the close of his life, which happened at South Lambeth, the 28th of February, 1757.

# CAWTHORN.

JAMES CAWTHORN was born in the year 1720, at or near Sheffield, and received his education partly at Rotherham and partly at Kirkby Lonsdale. Whether he was indebted to either of the universities for any part of the literature he possessed is uncertain, as his name does not appear in either of the list of graduates. His first employment was that of usher at the school of one Mr. Clare, in the city of London, whose sister he married. His wife died before him. In 1743 he was chosen master of Tunbridge School by the Skinner's Company; and in conjunction with his patrons founded a library, which is annexed to that seminary. In 1746 he published his poem of "Abelard to Eloisa," which, with two sermons, was all that he printed in his life time.

He is said to have been in the general intercourse of life generous and friendly; but in the conduct of his school singularly harsh and severe. He had some extraordinary foibles. With little skill in horsemanship, he was fond of hunting; and with no acquaintance with musick, he was an admirer of concerts and operas. He has been known to ride to London from Tunbridge, in order to be present at a musical performance, though he was under the necessity of being back by seven o'clock the next morning. He was killed by a fall from his horse as he was going to bespeak the musick on some occasion from Tunbridge Wells, April 15, 1761, and was buried in Tunbridge Church.

Over his remains is the following inscription:

Hic situs est
JACOBUS CAWTHORN, A. M.
Scholæ Tunbrigiensis magister,
Qui juventuti tum moribus tum literis instituenda
Operam magno non sine honore dedit.
Opibus, quas larga manu distribuit,
Fruitur, & in æternum fruetur.
Obiit. heu citius! Aprilii 15, 1761,
Ætatis 40.
Soror mœsta ex grato animo hoc posuit.

CHURCHILL

# CHURCHILL.

CHARLES CHURCHILL was born in Vine-street in the parish of St. John's, Westminster, in the year 1731. His father was lecturer and curate of the parish, and had also a living in the country. The son received his education at Westminster School, where stories are yet told of his early proficiency in his studies, of his negligence, and the excentricity of his conduct. It has been said, that he was sent to Oxford, and rejected from thence for want of a proper skill in the learned languages. It is also believed, that he was a short time at Cambridge, under Dr. Rutherford of St. John's. Neither of the Universities can claim the honour of his education, which it is certain was begun and finished at Westminster.

When he was little more than seventeen years old, he contracted an intimacy with a young lady in the neighbourhood, which ended in a marriage. This union, which had its origin in passion, terminated in disgust. But, during the time the attachment lasted, Mr. Churchill made such a progress in literature, and maintained so good a character, that notwithstanding the want of an university education, he was admitted into orders, and ordained by Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London.

His first provision in the church was a curacy of thirty pounds a year in Wales; to which remote part of the kingdom he retired with his wife, and applied himself to the duties of his station with assiduity and chearfulness. But being prompted to engage in a species of trade to add to his income, he in a short time experienced the folly of his deviation from his clerical profession, and a kind of bankruptcy soon followed.

His ill success brought him back to London; and, his father dying soon after, he succeeded him as curate and lecturer of St. John's; but, his income being insufficient for the maintenance of his family, he employed himself in teaching young ladies to read and write English with propriety and correctness, and for some time attended Mrs. Dennis's boarding-school. Still, however, his expences bore but a small proportion to his income. He became embarrassed

embarrassed with debts, and involved in difficulties, from which he was extricated by the assistance of Dr. Lloyd, the second master of Westminster School, who prevailed on his creditors to give him a release on receiving a fourth part of their respective debts. It is to the honour of Churchill to record, that, when his circumstances grew better, he voluntarily discharged the whole of the demands on him.

Though known to his intimate friends to be possessed of abilities calculated to entertain and instruct the publick, he was by no means forward to exhibit himself in the character of an author. He was little, if any thing, less than thirty years of age before he published any work with his name: if he produced any performance earlier, it was anonymous, and is now forgotten. In the year 1760, his friend Lloyd published "The Actor," a poem, addressed to Bonnel Thornton, which was received with great applause. The success of this performance probably incited Mr. Churchill to try his powers on a similar subject. Having been always fond of dramatic entertainments, he had been a constant attendant on the Theatre, and an accurate observer of the beauties or defects of the several performers. These he made the subject of a poem which he called "The Rosciad," first published anonymously in May 1761; but on being invidiously ascribed to Mr. Lloyd, he immediately reprinted it with his name. Few poems have been so generally read, and perhaps fewer so generally admired. This was followed by "The Apology," and that by "Night:" the merits of these were not inferior to the "Rosciad," but neither of them ever became so popular.

The political dissensions at this period increasing every day, at length became so violent, that few persons escaped being influenced in some manner by them. Mr. Churchill had contracted an intimacy with the heads of the party then called the Opposition, and, agreeably to the warmth of his temper, endeavoured to promote the interest of those with whom he was connected, by every effort in his power. A subject had been suggested to him as adapted for the then popular paper "The North Briton;" but, on considering it with attention, he thought it would be better to form it into a poem; this he executed under the title of "The Prophecy of Famine," inscribed to John Wilkes, Esq. Having thus embarked in politicks, he soon rendered himself of importance enough to be included in the general warrant under which Mr. Wilkes was taken into custody: he escaped however the search made after him, and continued his exertions against the Minister with great perseverance, and not without some effect. Hardly one of his poems, published after this period, is free from the reproach of party virulence.

The rapidity of his pen, and the eagerness with which his works were purchased, were circumstances not favourable to his reputation. As he proceeded in his literary career, he became more negligent; what he hastily wrote, he as hastily committed to the press. His latter works are manifestly inferior to his earliest productions. The genius of Churchill occasionally appears, but much dimmed and obscured. The fertility of his mind cannot

be

be more clearly demonstrated, than by observing, that all his works now republished were produced between May 1761, and November 1764; that is, in three years and a half.

While he was thus negligent of his fame as a writer, he was not more attentive to his reputation as a man. He separated from his wife, threw off his clerical character, and dressed himself ridiculously in laced cloaths. He was often to be seen in disgraceful society, and indulged in intemperances which the sober part of his friends could not avoid observing, and at the same time lamenting. His race was but short. In the autumn of 1764, he went to Bologne with Mr. Humphrey Cotes, in order to pay a visit to Mr. Wilkes, then in exile. There he was seized with a miliary fever, which baffled the medical art of two physicians of skill and reputation by whom he was attended. He died on the 4th of November, 1764, and was buried at Dover.

# FALCONER.

WILLIAM FALCONER was a native of Scotland, bred to the sea service, in which he spent the greatest part of his life in a very low situation. He displayed his poetical talents at an early age, by the publication, at Edinburgh, of "A Poem, sacred to the memory of his Royal Highness "Frederick Prince of Wales," 8vo, 1751. In the course of his sea life he appears to have really experienced the dangers so feelingly described in his poem, intituled, "The Shipwreck," printed in 1762. The publication of this work drew him from the obscurity of his situation: he was patronized by the Duke of York, to whom he addressed an Ode on his second departure from England as rear-admiral, and soon after received the appointment of Purser to the Royal George. In 1769 he published a "Marine Dictionary," an acknowledged useful work, and soon afterwards embarked on board the Aurora to settle in the East Indies. In December 1769 he arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, from whence he sailed soon after. These were the last tidings of the ship, which was never heard of afterwards. It is generally supposed to have taken fire, and that all the crew perished.

LLOYD.

# LLOYD.

ROBERT LLOYD was the son of Dr. Pearson Lloyd, second Master of Westminster School, at which seminary he received his education. He was born in 1733; and had for his school-fellows, Churchill, Thornton, Colman, and some others who have distinguished themselves in the literary world. To the first of these he was through life particularly attached. In the year 1751 he stood first on the list of Westminster scholars, who were sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, at the same time that his friend Colman obtained the same rank amongst those who were sent to Oxford. In 1755 he took the degree of Bachelor; and in 1761 that of Master of Arts. Though he went to the university from school in a manner so honourable to his literature, he never became a fellow of his college. To the decency or propriety of his conduct at Cambridge, little commendation can be afforded; the report of his contemporaries is not in the least favourable to his behaviour there. On leaving the university, he returned to Westminster, and became an assistant to his father as one of the ushers of the school, an employment he undertook with reluctance, and retired from with disgust. So early as the year 1750, he had written "The Progress of Envy," and had continued to cultivate his poetical talents during his residence at Cambridge. In the year 1760 he published "The Actor," and soon after quitted his office of usher of the school, determining for the future to rely on his pen for support. In this plan of life he was unsuccessful; though he engaged in many undertakings, he added little to his reputation, and nothing to his independence. The short remainder of his life passed not with less ignominy than the preceding part of it; a habit of dissipation had taken possession of him; he contracted debts which he was unable to discharge, and in the end became a prisoner in the Fleet, where he was almost entirely supported by the benevolence of his friend Churchill. On the death of that gentleman

he fell into a fit of despondence, and survived him but a few weeks. He died on the 15th of December, 1764, at the age of 31; and was buried on the 19th, in the church-yard of St. Bride's parish.

"Mr. Lloyd," says Mr. Wilkes, "was mild and affable in private life, of "gentle manners, and very engaging in conversation. He was an excellent "scholar, an easy natural poet. His peculiar excellence was the dressing "up an old thought in a new, neat, and trim manner. He was contented "to scamper round the foot of Parnassus on his little Welch poney, which "seems never to have tired. He left the fury of the winged steed, and the "daring flights of the sacred mountain, to the sublime genius of his friend "Churchill."

# CUNNINGHAM.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM was born at Dublin in the year 1729. His father was a wine-cooper in moderate circumstances, who, having obtained a prize in the lottery, commenced wine-merchant, and in a short time became a bankrupt. The small education our author received was at the grammar-school of Drogheda, under Mr. Clark. On the failure of his father he was recalled to Dublin, where, having no certain employment, he became attached to the theatre; and before he arrived at the age of seventeen years, produced a drama intituled, "Love in a Mist," performed several nights at the theatre in Smock Alley. By means of this performance having introduced himself to an acquaintance with the actors, he was prevailed on to engage with an itinerant manager, with whom he came to England; and in this profession he continued, with little variation, until his death.

As an actor he obtained little reputation. His figure was totally against him, either for tragedy or genteel comedy. His diffidence was too great to be ever overcome; and his voice was dissonant and offensive to the ear. He is said, however, to have shewn, in general, a good conception of his author, and as the representative of a mock French character, was not wholly undeserving of praise.

After

After he had published some of his best performances, he acquired reputation enough to receive an invitation from some booksellers in London, who proposed to employ him in some works of literature, by which he might obtain a livelihood, in a manner more easy and honourable than that in which he had been hitherto engaged. Convinced of the propriety of acceding to this proposal, he repaired from Edinburgh to London; but had hardly set foot in the capital before he was satisfied of the impracticability of the scheme. The bookseller by whom he was to have been employed had stopped payment; and the attention of the public was so entirely engrossed by scandal and political altercation, that he left the town with precipitation after a short and disagreeable stay in it, and once more rejoined his friends in the North.

This was the only effort he ever made to emerge from the abject situation in which youthful imprudence had originally placed him. But with this state he appeared by no means dissatisfied. Competence and obscurity were all he desired. He had no views of ambition; and indolence had possessed him so entirely, that he never made a second attempt. In a letter to a friend he describes himself in these terms: "You may remember my last expedi-" tion to London. I think I may be convinced by it that I am not calcu-" lated for the business you mention. Though I scribble (but a little nei-" ther) to amuse myself, the moment I considered it as my duty it would " cease to be an amusement, and I should of consequence be weary on't. I " am not enterprizing; and tolerably happy in my present situation."

The remainder of his life passed in one uniform strain. A few months before his death, being incapable of any theatrical exertion, he was removed to the house of his friend Mr. Slack, of Newcastle, who with great kindness received him under his roof, and paid every attention to him which his state required. After lingering some time under a nervous disorder, during which he burnt all his papers, he died the 18th of September, 1773, and was buried in St. John's church-yard, Newcastle, where, on a tombstone erected to his memory, is the following inscription:

Here lie the remains of
JOHN CUNNINGHAM,
Of his excellence
As a pastoral poet,
His works will remain a monument
For ages
After this temporary tribute of esteem
Is in dust forgotten.
He died in Newcastle, Sept. 18, 1773,
Aged 44.

# GREEN.

MATTHEW GREEN was of a family of good repute amongst the Dissenters, and had his education in that sect. He was a man of approved probity, and sweetness of temper and manners. His wit abounded in conversation, and was never known to give the least offence. He had a post in the Custom-house, and discharged the duty there with the utmost diligence and ability. He died about 1737, at the age of 41 years, in Nag's-head-court, Grace-church-street.

To the above account, which was furnished by Mr. Glover, author of "Leonidas," it may be added, that Mr. Green had not much learning, but knew a little Latin. He was very subject to the hyp, had some free notions on religious subjects; and, though bred amongst the Dissenters, grew disgusted at the preciseness and formality of the sect. He was nephew to Mr. Tanner, clerk of Fishmonger's-Hall. His poem intituled "Spleen" was written by piece-meal; and would never have been compleated, had he not been pressed to it by his friend Mr. Glover. By this gentleman, (who possessed, as he informed a person just before his death, many manuscripts of Mr. Green) it was committed to the press.

Mr. Green published nothing in his life-time. In 1732 he printed and gave away a few copies of "The Grotto." It has been observed by Mr. Melmoth, that there are more original thoughts thrown together in the poem of "Spleen," than he had ever read in the same compass of lines.

In the "European Magazine" for July 1785, are some further anecdotes of our author.

# GOLDSMITH.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was the third son of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, and was born at Elphin, in the county of Roscommon in Ireland, in the year 1729. After being instructed in the classicks at the school of Mr. Hughes, he was admitted as Sizer in Trinity College, Dublin, the 11th of June, 1744; and on the 27th of February, 1749, O. S. two years after the regular time, he obtained the degree of bachelor of arts. Intending to devote himself to the study of physick, he left Dublin, and proceeded to Edinburgh in 1751, where he continued until the beginning of the year 1754, when, having imprudently engaged to pay a considerable sum of money for a fellow student, he was obliged precipitately to quit the place.

He made his escape as far as Sunderland, but there was overtaken by the emissaries of the law, and arrested. From this situation he was released by the friendship of Mr. Laughlin Maclane and Dr. Sleigh. He then took his passage on board a Dutch ship to Rotterdam; from whence, after a short stay he proceeded to Brussels. He then visited great part of Flanders; and after passing some time at Strasburgh and Louvain, where he obtained a degree of bachelor of physick, he accompanied an English gentleman to Geneva.

This tour, we are told, was made for the most part on foot. He had left England with little money; and being of a thoughtless turn, and at that time possessing a body capable of sustaining any fatigue, he proceeded resolutely in gratifying his curiosity by the sight of different countries. He had some knowledge of the French Language, and of musick: he played tolerably well on the German flute, which now at times became the means of his subsistence. His learning produced him a hospitable reception at most of the religious houses that he visited, and his music made him welcome to the peasants of Flanders and Germany. "Whenever I approached a peasant's house toward nightfall," he used to say, "I played one of my most merry "tunes; and that generally procured me not only a lodging, but subsis-"tence for the next day: but, *in truth*, (his constant expression) I must "own, whenever I attempted to entertain persons of a higher rank, they always

" always thought my performance odious, and never made me any return " for my endeavours to please them."

On his arrival at Geneva he was recommended as a proper person for a travelling tutor to a young gentleman, who had unexpectedly been left a considerable sum of money by a near relation. This connexion lasted but a short time: they disagreed in the South of France, and parted. Friendless and destitute. Dr. Goldsmith was again left exposed to all the miseries of indigence in a foreign country. He, however, bore them with great fortitude; and, having by this time satisfied his curiosity abroad, he bent his course towards England, and arrived at Dover the beginning of the year 1758.

On his return he found himself so poor that it was with difficulty he was enabled to reach the metropolis with a few half-pence only in his pocket. He was an entire stranger, and without any recommendation. He offered himself to several apothecaries in the character of a journeyman, but had the mortification to find every application without success. At length he was admitted into the house of a chemist, and was employed in his laboratory until he discovered the residence of his friend Dr. Sleigh, who patronized and supported him. He afterwards was an assistant to Dr. Milner, who kept an academy at Peckham; but, being introducedto some booksellers, he relinquished his situation at the school, and commenced author. His first works were " The Bee," a weekly pamphlet, and " The Enquiry into the pre- " sent State of polite Literature in Europe." He then resided in Green-arbour-court, near the Old-baily, from whence he removed to the Temple, where he lived during the rest of his life.

From the year 1759 to the time of his death his works were very numerous, and on a great variety of subjects. In 1765 he established his fame by the publication of " The Traveller." In 1766 " The Vicar of Wakefield" appeared. In 1768 " The Goodnatured Man" was acted at Covent Garden. In 1769 he published " The Deserted Village," and in 1772 " She Stoops " to Conquer" was represented at the same theatre. Besides these, he submitted to the drudgery of compiling Histories of England, of Greece, of Rome, of " The Earth and Animated Nature," which procured for him more money than fame. Just before his death he had formed a design for executing an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences; a plan which met with no encouragement.

Though his writings produced great emolument, he was generally necessitous; to which an improvident generosity, and a ridiculous habit of gaming a good deal contributed. He had been for some years afflicted with a strangury, which brought on a kind of habitual despondency. At length in March 1774, finding himself out of order, he, against the advice of his physician, took so large a portion of a medicine of violent operation, that it was supposed to have contributed to his dissolution on the 4th of April, 1774. He was buried in the Temple Church-yard, and a monument has *been erected to his memory in* Westminster Abbey.

P. WHITE-

# P. WHITEHEAD.

PAUL WHITEHEAD was the youngest son of Mr. Edmund Whitehead, a tradesman, said to have been a taylor in Castle-yard, Holborn, and was born in 1710, on St. Paul's day, from which circumstance he obtained the christian name he bore. He received his education from a clergyman at Hitchin in Hertfordshire. Being intended for trade, he was placed an apprentice to a mercer in London; but, disliking his situation, he soon quitted it, and entered himself of the Temple, in order to study the law.

Being acquainted with Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury-lane theatre, he was prevailed upon by that gentleman to become bound with him for the payment of a considerable sum of money, which, when it became due, the manager was unable to discharge. He absconded, therefore, and left Mr. Whitehead answerable for it, who, being arrested, was confined for several years within the walls of the Fleet Prison.

His first performance was "The State Dunces," inscribed to Mr. Pope, in 1733; and in 1738 he published "Manners," a satire, in which some nobleman having been treated with very little respect, a complaint was made to the House of Lords, and on the 12th February, 1738-9, it was voted to be scandalous, and Dodsley the publisher of it was taken into custody by the Black Rod, and confined a week. On this occasion Mr. Whitehead withdrew until the storm was over.

His next performance was "The Gymnasiad," published in 1744; and that was succeeded by "Honour, a Satire," in 1747. At this period the Prince of Wales being in opposition to the Court, Mr. Whitehead connected himself with that party, and was author of the celebrated pamphlet, called "The Case of the honourable Alexander Murray," which fell under the censure of the House of Commons, who procured Mr. Owen, the publisher to be prosecuted for vending it. In 1755 he published "The Epistle to Dr. Thompson.

He had, in the year 1735, married Miss Dyer, only daughter of Sir Swinnerton Dyer, of Spain's Hall in Essex, with whom he is said to have received 10,000l. She died young; and Mr. Whitehead, after his release from Fleetwood's debt, lived in a state of independence, if not affluence. He was particularly attached to Lord Le Despenser, at whose house he almost constantly resided, and by whom he was held in an equal degree of estimation. To this nobleman he bequeathed his heart, with 50l. for an urn, desiring it to be placed in some corner of his lordship's mausoleum, as a memorial of its warm attachment to the noble founder.

For some time before Mr. Whitehead's death, he lingered under a severe illness, during which he employed himself in burning his manuscripts. Though his disorder was such as no medicine would reach, he bore the excruciating pains which he suffered with great resignation, and died December 30, 1774. On the 13th of August following his heart was deposited, as he desired, with great pomp and ceremony.

# ARMSTRONG.

JOHN ARMSTRONG was born in Castleton parish, Roxboroughshire, where his father and brother were both ministers. He compleated his education in the university of Cambridge; and took his degree in physick, February 4, 1732, with much reputation. He soon after came to the metropolis, where he was more successful as an author than a physician.

In 1737 he published his celebrated, though too licentious poem, called, "The Œconomy of Love;" which has passed through many editions, more, it is to be feared, to the advantage of the bookseller than to the reader.

In 1744 he produced "The Art of preserving Health;" a work, in which an excellent critick observes, there is a classical correctness and closeness of style that are truly admirable.

In 1745 he was appointed one of the physicians to the Hospital for lame and sick Soldiers behind Buckingham House; and in 1760 went physician to the army in Germany. He was the author of several medical works, which do not appear to have acquired much reputation.

He died in September 1779; and to the surprize of his friends, left a *considerable sum of money*, saved by great parsimony out of a very moderate *come arising from his half-pay*.

LANGHORNE

# LANGHORNE.

JOHN LANGHORNE, was a native of Kirkby-Stephen in Westmoreland. His father was the Reverend Joseph Langhorne, who died when this his son was young. The place of his education is unknown; nor does it appear from what seminary he obtained the academical honour by which he was distinguished. About the year 1761 he was at Clare-Hall, Cambridge; but his name does not appear in the list of Graduates either here or at Oxford. After entering into holy orders he became tutor to the sons of Robert Cracroft, Esq. of Hackthorne in Lincolnshire, whose daughter he afterwards married. In December 1765 he was appointed assistant at Lincoln's-Inn. His marriage took place in January, 1767; and the death of his lady soon after produced the monody which does equal honour to the taste and sensibility of the author, and to the virtues of the person celebrated. He was a very frequent and miscellaneous writer, both in verse and prose. Besides a great variety of pieces, to which he affixed his name, he was the author of many others which were anonymous. Some time before his death he was presented to the living of Blagden in Somersetshire. He died on the first of April, 1779.

# JOHNSON.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was the eldest son of Michael Johnson, a bookseller at Lichfield, in which city this great man was born on the 7th day of September, 1709. The chief part of his education he received under Mr. Hunter, master of the free-school of his native city. On the 31st of October, 1728, he was admitted of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he was entered as a commoner.

He remained in the University about three years in the whole, when the inability of his father to support him longer compelled him to quit the place without a degree. To maintain himself, he condescended to accept the office of under-master, or usher, of a free grammar-school at Market-Bosworth in Leicestershire, which he relinquished in a very short time. He resided in 1733 at Birmingham, and there is supposed to have been first introduced to Mrs. Porter, who about the year 1736 became his wife.

With the small property he acquired with this lady, he attempted to establish a boarding-school for young gentlemen at Edial near Lichfield, but without success. On this disappointment he quitted the country in March 1737, in company with Mr. Garrick, and came to London, where he remained during the rest of his life.

In London he had to contend with all the inconveniencies which a stranger, poor and friendless, could encounter; and for the greater part of his life, had no other income than what arose from his writings; which, however excellent, afforded but a scanty and even precarious subsistence. In this state, often struggling with adversity, he passed twenty-four years from his arrival in the metropolis.

An uniformity of life so unbroken can only be marked by the publication of his works; the principal of which shall be enumerated. On his arrival in town he engaged to write for "The Gentleman's Magazine;" and in 1738 published "London, a Poem," in imitation of Juvenal. About 1743 he was employed by Osborn, the bookseller, in compiling the "Catalogue of the Harleian Library." In 1744 the "Life of Savage" appeared; and in

1746

1746 he undertook to compile the "Dictionary of the English language," which was not compleated until the year 1755.

He did not confine himself entirely to this work. In January 1749, "The "Vanity of Human Wishes," his second imitation of Juvenal, was published. In February "Irene" was acted at Drury-lane. In 1750 he began "The Rambler," which was continued until March 1752.

In that year he lost his wife, whose memory he has perpetuated by the excellent "Sermon written on her Death." In 1755 his Dictionary was published; and the next year he put forth Proposals for publishing Shakspeare, with notes. In 1758 he began "The Idler;" and the next year produced "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."

The beginning of his present Majesty's reign was favourable to the fortune of Dr. Johnson. He was amongst the first to whom a pension was offered. His acceptance of it released him from the necessity of continual application, and gave him a respite from literary drudgery. Soon afterwards he was introduced to the family of Mr. Thrale, in which he passed much of his time, until the death of that gentleman.

In 1765 he published his edition of "Shakspeare;" and about the same time had the degree of Doctor of Laws conferred on him by the University of Dublin. He had before had the degree of Master of Arts given him, unasked by the University of Oxford. In 1773 he travelled into Scotland; and two years afterwards published the Narrative of his Tour. He several times undertook the defence of Administration against the opponents of the Minister; and it has been asserted, that it was once in contemplation to procure him a seat in parliament.

When the work, now reprinted, was undertaken, he engaged to furnish the Lives of the several Poets. These were published at two different times, in 1779 and 1781, and were his last productions. His health had been some time declining; he lingered about a year, and died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was buried in Westminster-Abbey; where a monument is about to be erected to his memory.

# W. WHITEHEAD.

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD was born at Cambridge, in the beginning of the year 1714-15. His father was a baker in that town, who, through indolence and dissipation, left nothing behind him but some debts, which his son very honorably discharged. His mother was a very amiable, prudent, and exemplary woman.

Mr. Whitehead received the first rudiments of his education at some common school at Cambridge; but at the age of fourteen, July 6, 1728, he was removed to Winchester, having obtained a nomination into that College by means of Mr. Bromley. At school he was always of a delicate turn, and though obliged to go to the hills with the other boys, he spent his time there in reading either plays or poetry; and was also particularly fond of the "Atalantis," and all other books of private history or character. He very early exhibited his taste for poetry; for, while other boys were contented with shewing up twelve or fourteen lines, he would fill half a sheet, but always with English verse. When he was sixteen he wrote a whole comedy.

In the year 1733, the Earl of Peterborough having Mr. Pope at his house, near Southampton, carried him to Winchester, to shew him the college-school. The Earl gave ten guineas to be disposed of in prizes amongst the boys; and Mr. Pope set them a subject to write upon, viz. PETERBOROUGH. Prizes of a guinea each were given to six of the boys, of whom Whitehead was one. The remaining sum was laid out for other boys in subscriptions to Pine's Horace, then about to be published. He enjoyed for some little time a lucrative place in the college, that of prepositor of the hall.

At the election in September 1735, he was treated with singular injustice, for through the force of superior interest he was placed so low on the roll, that it was scarcely possible for him to succeed to New College. Being now superannuated he left Winchester of course, deriving no other advantage *from the college than a good* education.

Two

Two months after his disappointment at Winchester, he removed to the place of his nativity, where the peculiar circumstances of his being the orphan son of a baker of Cambridge gave him an unexceptionable claim to one of the scholarships founded at Clare-Hall, by Mr. Thomas Pyke of that trade and town. His mother accordingly admitted him a sizer of this college, under the tuition of Mess. Curling, Goddard, and Hopkinson, November 26, 1735.

The first pieces he published were verses on public occasions, the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1736, and the birth of his son the present king in 1738. In 1741 appeared his epistle "On the Danger of writing "Verse," which was followed by "Atys and Adrastus" in 1743; and that by the "Epistle from Ann Boleyn in the Tower to King Henry the Eighth," the same year. His next poem was his "Essay on Ridicule," which also appeared in 1743; and to that succeeded "Nobility, an Epistle to the Earl of Ashburnham." During the time of his being an under-graduate, he lived a very studious life, observing the strictest frugality possible, that he might be the less burthensome to an affectionate mother. After taking a very creditable degree, and being emancipated from those mathematical studies for which young men of his tribe seldom have much relish, he wrote, as we have seen, rapidly, though not carelessly for the press; but this rapidity, as it did not continue through life, probably arose at the time rather from a laudable desire of self-maintenance, than any undue eagerness for poetical fame.

In June 1742 he was elected fellow of Clare-Hall. In April 1743 he lost his mother; and in the same year commenced Master of Arts. His intention at that time was to take orders; and with that view he prepared himself for the Church; but shortly afterwards a circumstance occurred, which led him to defer putting this design in practice, and in the end occasioned his relinquishing the idea entirely. The late Earl of Jersey was making enquiries after a proper person to take the private tuition of his second son, now become his only hope from the death of his elder brother; on which account probably he durst not trust him to the dangers of a public education, as his constitution appeared to be very delicate. Fortunately for the young Viscount, Mr. Whitehead was recommended to his father, by Mr. Commissary Graves, as a person fully qualified for this important charge. His recommendation was successful; and Mr. Whitehead, when the offer was made, did not hesitate to accept it. He therefore in the summer of 1745 removed to the Earl's house, where he was placed upon the most liberal footing.

At Michaelmas 1746 he resigned his fellowship; and, having now many intervals of leisure, he employed himself in writing "The Roman Father," which was acted in 1750. In 1754 he collected his works into a volume, and in the same year produced "Creusa Queen of Athens." The exhibition of this play was hardly over, before he was called upon to attend his pupil, and Lord Viscount Nuneham, son to the Earl of Harcourt, in their travels, *as their joint Governor.* His

After passing through Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Holland, he returned to Harwich in September 1756. During his absence he had received the badges of secretary and register of the order of the Bath; and in 1757 his finances were further improved by the appointment of Poet Laureat. On his arrival in England he was pressed to continue in the family of Lord Jersey; and there and in the house of Lord Harcourt he resided for fourteen years.

In 1762 he produced "The school for Lovers," and in the same year his "Charge to the Poets." In 1770 "The trip to Scotland" was acted; and in 1774 he again collected his performances into two volumes. "Variety" was published in 1776; and "The Goat's Beard" in 1777. He also employed himself in other dramas, some of which finished, and others imperfect, he left behind him in manuscript. He died at his lodgings in Charles-street, Grosvenor-Square, April 14, 1785; and was buried in South Audley Chapel.

"Thus having completed," says Mr. Mason, from whom all the particulars of the preceding account are taken, his seventieth year, he died, retaining all his faculties more perfectly than is usually the lot of persons who live to such an age. Of these his memory was the most remarkable, which, being always strong, continued to that late period with no diminution of vigour. And, as his reading and observations had been far more extensive and various than he had occasion to exhibit in that mode of writing which he chiefly employed to convey his sentiments, this accurate retention of what he had by study acquired made him a living library, always open to communicate its treasures to his acquaintance, without obtruding itself upon them by any ostentatious display or assumed superiority.

# JENYNS.

SOAME JENYNS was the only son of Sir Roger Jenyns, of Bottesham in Cambridge, at which place he was born about 1705. His mother's name was Palmer, of the family of Sir Charles Palmer. After a common school education, he was entered a fellow-commoner of St. John's College; but left the University, as was formerly the usual practice with gentlemen of fortune, without taking any degree.

He early displayed his poetical talents. In 1729 he published "The Art "of Dancing;" and, in 1735, wrote his poetical "Epistle to Lord Love-"lace." This was followed by several others, which he collected into a volume in 1752. On the publication of Hawkins Browne's Latin poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," in 1752, Mr. Jenyns made a translation of it into English, which was published in 1758, in Dodsley's Collection of Poems. The "Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil" appeared in 1757: and to this succeeded several other performances both in prose and verse, either in defiance of government, or levelled at some persons in opposition to the measures of administration. In 1776 his celebrated work, intituled "A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion," was published; a performance which has been commended in terms of the highest praise by some, whilst it has been spoken of in the slightest manner by others. At the close of this volume he made a very explicit declaration of his belief in the doctrine of the Christian religion. Speaking of his work he says, "Should it ever have the honour to be admitted into such good com-"pany, they will immediately, I know, determine that it must be the work "of some enthusiast or methodist, some beggar, or some madman. I shall "therefore beg leave to assure them, that the author is very far removed "from all these characters; that he once perhaps believed as little as them-"selves; but having some leisure, and more curiosity, he employed them "both in resolving a question, which seemed to him of some importance— "Whether Christianity was really an imposture, founded on an absurd, in-"credible, and obsolete fable, as many suppose it? or whether it is what it

"seems

" pretends to be, a Revelation, communicated to mankind by the interpo-
" sition of some Supernatural Power? On a candid enquiry, he soon found
" that the first was an absolute impossibility; and that its pretensions to the
" latter were founded on the most solid grounds. In the further pursuit
" of his examination, he perceived at every step new lights arising, and some
" of the brightest from parts of it the most obscure, but productive of the
" clearest proofs, because equally beyond the power of human artifice to
" invent, and human reason to discover. These arguments, which have
" convinced him of the divine origin of this religion, he has here put toge-
" ther in as clear and concise a manner as he was able, thinking they might
" have the same effect upon others; and being of opinion, that, if there
" were a few more true Christians in the world, it would be beneficial to
" themselves, and by no means detrimental to the public."

In 1782 he published "Disquisitions on several Subjects;" which pro-
duced answers both grave and comic, from different hands, and with diffe-
rent degrees of merit. He continued writing almost till the close of his life;
and he had the felicity to preserve his faculties unimpaired, and his spirits
undiminished, to his latest period.

He was introduced into the senate under the patronage of Sir Robe
Walpole, and was elected, first, for the county of Cambridge in the ye
1741. He represented it again in the parliament of 1747. In that of 17
he was member for Dunwich in Suffolk; and in 1761 took his seat for
town of Cambridge, which place he continued to represent so long as he
mained in parliament.

In 1755 he was appointed one of the lords of trade and plantatio
post which he held during every change of administration, until i
abolished in the year 1780. He was in general an adherent of the mi
for the time being; and was a useful, active, and diligent member
House of Commons, though he shared, as he admitted in one of his
no gift of tongue.

He had been twice married: first to Miss Soame, to whom his fath
been guardian; and afterwards to the lady whom he left his widow
died the 18th of December, 1787, at his house in Tilney-street: an
death-bed, says a late writer, he reviewed his life, and with a visib
of joy he gloried in the belief that his little book on Christianity h
useful. He spoke of his death as one prepared to die. He did n
from it as an evil, nor as a punishment; but met it with decent
as his original destiny, the kind release from what was worse, t
summons to all that is better.

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